

MARRY OR BURN

MARRY OR BURN

By George Ryley Scott

*"But if they cannot contain, let them marry:
for it is better to marry than to burn."*

CORINTHIANS, VII. 9



**NEW YORK
GREENBERG : PUBLISHER**

Copyright, 1931, by
GREENBERG, PUBLISHER, INC.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY THE VAIL-BALLOU PRESS, INC., BINGHAMTON, N. Y.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	7

PART 1

MONOGAMY ANALYZED

CHAPTER		
I	THE REAL ART OF LOVE	15
II	WHAT MARRIAGE IS	27
III	CAUSES OF THE DECAY OF MARRIAGE IN TEN- URE	57
IV	CAUSES OF THE DECLINE IN POPULARITY OF MARRIAGE	74

PART 2

CAUSES OF UNHAPPY MARRIAGES

V	SEX IGNORANCE	111
VI	SEXUAL EXCESSES AND ABNORMALITIES	140
VII	THE DESIRE FOR CHANGE	150
VIII	SOCIAL INTERCOURSE	161

PART 3

THE FUTURE OF MARRIAGE

IX	CHRISTIANITY'S MARRIAGE MUDDLE	171
----	--	-----

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
X WILL MONOGAMY CONTINUE?	177
XI FREE LOVE AND COMPANIONATE MARRIAGE .	184
XII THE UNMARRIED WOMAN'S RIGHT TO LOVE .	190
XIII WANTED: A SANE SYSTEM OF DIVORCE . .	196
XIV THE RIGHT TO PRACTICE BIRTH CONTROL .	216
XV THE NEED FOR LEGALIZED ABORTION . . .	225
XVI CHILD-BEARING MUST BE MADE ATTRACTIVE	232
XVII INCEST	237
XVIII IN EPITOME	248

PREFACE

TEN years ago this book could not have been written. I very much doubt if, without giving credence to the processes of thought which find favor with mystics, spiritualists, exorcists, Shamanists, necromancers, sorcerers and other charlatans, it could have been written five years ago. Things are moving at a prodigious rate. Our morals have changed more in the last ten years than in the previous thousand. Atheism, no longer the cult of the intelligentsia, has been accepted almost in one huge gulp by the masses. Birth control knowledge, once the luxury of the aristocracy, is common property. Homosexuality, once the vice of esoteric intellectuals, thanks to the mistaken tactics of professional moralists, is a tea-table topic which rivals in popularity psycho-analysis, banned novels, the comparative values of laxatives, swearing and obstetrics.

Because of this transcending change, any book on the marriage question that is over five years' old is not worth reading except as a historical

PREFACE

document. The fault is none of the author's. Neither man nor god could foresee the cataclysmic change that has swept over society like a whirlwind.

Few, even of the most fatuous, are prepared to say that all's well with marriage to-day. Even the clergy are beginning to have their doubts. What is more, they are beginning to parade these doubts for all the world to see. And in the process they are adding fuel to the fire. These bombinating ornaments of the Church, like the hugely-circulated daily and weekly bilge-confections, in their passion for wealth, often do violence to their own principles. Thus the capitalist press, through its urge to give to the people tasty pap and embellished pictures of society's amusements, breeds socialism; thus eminent theologians, in their efforts to secure notoriety and money, themselves induce much obscene guffawing at the Holy Writ. In particular have they done much to destroy the remnants of respect held for the Church marriage service. After much semi-whispering, much shaking and scratching of senile heads, they have even gone so far as to suggest certain puerile amendments in the

PREFACE

wording of the ceremony itself. In the interests of the Christian religion they pretend to have at heart, it would have been far better had these bilious soul-savers kept their hands off epithalamic overtures altogether. All that they have actually done is to show up the trumpery nature of the religion they are peddling; to exhibit to millions of morons the fact that the marriage service they have subscribed to is none of God's making, but is merely the composition of a gang of dog-collared humans. What, in short, the revered gentlemen have done and are continuing to do, is precisely the same as if the late Houdini, after each performance, had demonstrated the tricks of his trade; as if the lamented Madame Blavatsky had concluded each theosophic lecture with a self-revelatory demonstration of its thaumaturgic basis; as if the Fox Sisters of imperishable memory had publicly admitted how they spoofed a million men and women and laid the foundation of a modern religion.

Thus either directly or by implication the affliction of marriage with a destructive cancer is universally admitted. The judges and the moralists sighingly record the fact, putting the blame

PREFACE

on the prevailing loose morals of the day; the newspapers feature it; the movies burlesque it. In fact marriage, and likewise religion, are confronted with the greatest possible danger, to wit, ridicule.

The fact that so huge a number of marriages turn out dismal failures is no more, in itself, a condemnation of monogamous marriage than is the fact of the masses being unable to appreciate Nietzsche any negation of his genius. Successful marriages are rare because the art of love is restricted to the few, a fact which explains why the State, wearing the clumsy blinkers manufactured and fitted by Christianity, acts as though this art were acquirable by everybody and anybody. Marriage can be heavenly; it can be hellish. The tragedy of marriage lies in a myopically afflicted State attempting to keep together in permanent union those who have missed entering the gates of heaven and are groping about in hell. Here precisely lies the danger; a danger which has always been present in some degree but which in recent years has increased in extent a thousandfold. In the realization of this lies the only possibility of preserving some form of

PREFACE

monogamous marriage. Sooner or later it will have to be conceded that marriage can endure successfully only so long as love endures; that for this very reason it is in any permanent form an exclusive, a transcendental, and not a catholic form of union. For true and enduring love is one of the rarest things on earth.

The forces which are splintering the old marriage concept, coincidentally are rendering inevitable certain modifications and concessions. To understand thoroughly these forces and their corollaries necessitates an exact diagnosis of the whole of the diseases affecting marriage. This diagnosis is precisely what I have essayed in the present work. In addition I have attempted to link up the sociological, medical and biological aspects of the subject. True, there are many sociological studies of marriage: there are many biological and medical studies. But each fails to provide a thorough analysis of marriage through the very fact that it presents an incomplete picture, and in many cases an inaccurate picture. No realistic study of the marriage question can aspire to completeness that neglects the pathological side, the disruptive effects of sex abnor-

PREFACE

malities and inhibitions; no technical scientific study that ignores the more human aspects can do anything but present a bare, lifeless and botched analysis. In the following pages I have attempted to repair to some extent these deficiencies, and in pursuance of this task I have been compelled to deal frankly with matters which to some may seem distasteful.

GEORGE RYLEY SCOTT.

PART 1
MONOGAMY ANALYZED

CHAPTER ONE

THE REAL ART OF LOVE

THERE are still for the finding a certain number of men and women, not all in their seventies, who have never succeeded in divorcing love from procreation. They heave sighs of disgust and despair at the contemplation of the childless couples of to-day. They never grasp so obvious a fact as that the birth of children is as easy where the parents hate each other as where they are in love. This handcuffing of procreation to love has been and is still responsible for endless confusion. This confusion originally arose when marriage was made a sacrament. It was cemented by the Church, drummed into the ears of the yokelry by moralists, and became in time as platitudinous as the Commandments. True, in recent years, through the incidence of birth control, the original notion has received shattering blows, but there yet remains a large number of

MARRY OR BURN

adherents in theory, if not in practice. It is the message of Anthony Ludovici, of Floyd Dell, as it is of the Christian Church. And the notion that procreation is the sole purpose of marriage is all that is really implied in Shaw's rococo thunderings, when the decorations, the piddling epigrams, the gassy platitudes, have been removed. But despite the bombilations of reformers, moralists, the clergy and the Pope; despite, too, the pseudo-scientific neocreative fecundation of Shaw and his disciples, the ranks of the adherents to the concept are visibly thinning. The thousands cling to the idea; the millions abjure it.

Queerly enough, however, though the disassociation of love and procreation is a fact, there is no such disassociation of love and the sex act, *per se*. Even the sophisticated devourer of Michael Arlen's Mayfair puddings has never actually divorced love from coition. It seems in truth to be the penalty for modern sophistication that the moment love is dragged away from sexual intercourse and isolated, it ceases to exist. The message of the moderns as exemplified in the novels of Aldous Huxley, Bruce Marshall, *et*

THE REAL ART OF LOVE

al., is that love is purely and solely a physiological act, that sexual intercourse in its most passionate and ecstatic form is neither more nor less than glorified masturbation, or hybrid sadism. So much so, in fact, that the twentieth-century modernist conception of love, stripped of the neologisms imposed on it, surrounding it, decorating it, camouflaging it, is basically and precisely the self-same ascetic conception that St. Paul paraded two thousand years ago. Huxley, Arlen, Marshall, *et al.*, have put to jazz music the theme that Cyprian, Tertullian, Musonius, Œcumenius, Chrysostom, solemnly hymned centuries ago.

But not all have rediscovered the ascetic idealism which looked on marriage as simply fornication. There are yet a few millions whose acquaintance with the antics of the modernists is limited to vague ideas respecting long-haired scarecrows who commence proper nouns with small letters, who draw crazy pictures, who dignify living with prostitutes as the practice of free love. It is these millions who embrace the momentarily foolish notion that everyone can love who can perform the sexual act.

MARRY OR BURN

II

Marriage is largely an accident. That is to say, the fact that John Thomson marries Sarah Jones is not due to any special urge on the part of this particular John for that particular Sarah, but is due to accident throwing them together at an opportune moment and an opportune age. So largely, indeed, does accident bulk in the incidence of marriage that lack of opportunities for meeting girls instead of, as is popularly supposed, causing a decline in the number of marriages, actually increases the marriage rate, and also makes for earlier unions. The reason for this stands out boldly. Once sex interest is aroused, the danger of the man falling for the alluring pleasures and mysteries of marriage looms up bigly: the sight of a pretty leg, a rouged face, a decorated body, may create that particular en-ergetizing of the colloids that is popularly termed love. Where this interior commotion is set in force by many spectacular girls simultaneously or in quick succession, the danger of the emotion fructifying into legal union is considerably weakened. Thus the method adopted by the sophis-

THE REAL ART OF LOVE

ticated husband-catcher of eliminating as far as possible all competition and coincidentally of hurrying forward with all speed the preliminaries to the nuptial tying, is based on sound psychology. The danger of a man losing his freedom is in inverse ratio to the number and variety of his philandering experiences.

The emotion that ends in marriage is in numberless instances not love at all. In the huge majority of cases it is at root neither more nor less than a desire to fornicate respectably or cheaply or hygienically; and, in consequence, after the first gush of sentiment, which often enough barely survives the honeymoon period, it degenerates into licensed amateur fornication. It is difficult, in its earliest manifestations, to differentiate purely physical attraction from love. It is difficult because while love implies physical attraction, sexual intercourse does not necessarily imply love. A man can satisfy his libidinous desires without caring a rap for the woman whose body he uses. It is, however, a fact that although every man recognizes this when he sleeps with a prostitute, the majority of adolescents and senescents, and a big number of men in their saner

MARRY OR BURN

years, fail to recognize that precisely the same thing can happen and does happen in the cases of girls whose respectability puts off the satisfaction of desire until the day when the wearing of a gold band constitutes a license for the enjoyment of lust.

But, after all, it is impossible to consider love realistically. For love, like Jesus Christ, like Satan, like God, like the Holy Ghost, does not exist.

III

What does exist is an abstraction which may be termed an art of love. In this there is nothing new. Ovid was perfectly well aware of it when he wrote *Ars amatoria* a couple of thousand years ago. Remy de Gourmont, a vastly more profound and more entertaining writer, while recognizing this art of love, pointed out with truth that it is an art necessarily restricted to the few. It is not just a matter of technique, such as that somewhat clumsily and snootily propounded in Vatsyayana's *Kama Sutra*. Admittedly, as we shall see later, this technique is a decided and definite help, but in itself it is not enough. The

THE REAL ART OF LOVE

real art of love lies in keeping up the fiction of love; in each partner keeping alive the fugacious idealization of the other individual's personality. In other words, it embraces the notion that after marriage the man must continue to believe that his wife retains the charms with which before marriage his imagination endowed her, that this particular girl who shares his bed is the most enchanting of her sex. It implies that the girl must go on seeing in her partner the vision of an Adonis. It implies that both of them shall continue to look on the prosaic act of copulation as something ineffably mysterious, attractive and seductive. If this fiction does not exist, the abstraction called love does not exist. What exists is either affection, or respect, or a purely physical attraction analogous to that of a man for a prostitute, a cock for a hen, or a dog for a bitch.

IV

Against the enduring of this massive fiction, it must be confessed, are continually at work from the very moment the orgiastic honeymoon rites end, disintegrating, disruptive, and disillusion-

MARRY OR BURN

ing influences that mount in number and in capacity with every successive year that marriage endures. Thus the art of keeping alive the fiction cumulatively increases in difficulty.

It is an argument beloved of the sex reformers that the secrecy with which the whole subject of sex has been smeared, the mystery with which it has been surrounded, have done much damage to the fundament of love. In part their thesis is sound. But for every marriage that in the past was damaged, and for every divorce that was caused, through the lack of sex knowledge on the part of man or wife or both, there are to-day one hundred such wrecks induced by too much sex knowledge.

Love, as I have already indicated, shares this much in common with religion—it thrives on mystery. Even the sexual act itself is an enormously overrated pleasure. To the average sophisticated man, sleeping with a fresh woman is an enjoyment somewhat on a par with the titillation that a Sunday-school superintendent gets out of a drink in a seaside public-house, or a clergyman experiences when he peeps into a continental brothel, or a society girl manages to get out of

THE REAL ART OF LOVE

seeing in print or hearing in susurrated accents the synonym in vogue amongst the unwashed for the act of procreation. Woman herself, in the past, has been greatly responsible for this aureole of mystery surrounding and obscuring the sexual act. She succeeded in giving to what amongst animals is an affair scarcely dissimilar to the act of defecation, all the charm, the alluringness, the captivation of an elaborately guarded and closely veiled mysterious, titillating *tour de force*.

Science has killed Christianity. And science is killing love. The eugenists, the psycho-analysts, the sex reformers, amongst them, have dragged away from sexual intercourse every shred of mystery it ever possessed. Young men and young women to-day, when they marry, are in possession of a good working knowledge of the physiology of the sexual act; they have at their command a whole armamentarium of disillusioning information. The flavor of latitancy is gone, the spice of arcana vanished, the romance of sex is no more. Nine-tenths of the pleasure connected with the contructive overtures preceding the sexual act is impossible between two persons whose code is to sneer at psychical love. What remains is merely

MARRY OR BURN

the pleasure immediately resulting from physiological friction—the love-making of fiction has given place to the masturbation of scientific cynicism. Realizing this, D. H. Lawrence is sounder in his views on love than is Aldous Huxley; Mencken is more truly realistic than was Zola or the Goncourt brothers.

The real art of love lies in keeping alive the fiction of love. On the success or otherwise of the attempt more than upon any other solitary thing depends the endurance of marriage. It implies, this art, too, something more than the sexual attraction that inevitably looms largely in the creation of the chemical process termed “falling in love.” If there is nothing but this purely physical attraction, all love departs when a satiety of fornication is obtained. It is here that the law and the Church make their terrible and grotesque error, and after the error has been proved a million times, blindly continue to act as though it were nonexistent.

This physiological side of marriage is too often stressed as if it were the only side. No love can endure where this is the sole motivation which holds the married couple together. Love implies

THE REAL ART OF LOVE

respect and consideration: it means that the husband will temper his physical desire with consideration for the feelings of his wife; it means also that the wife will look upon her husband as something other than a copulating machine in the night and an earner of bread during the day.

But while there must be no obsession with sex there must likewise be no ignoring its existence. The one is as disruptive in its influence as is the other. To pretend sex isn't there, or doesn't count, is idiotic. To settle down to a partnership in which the husband looks on his wife as an unpaid housekeeper, or the wife acts the part of a parasite living on a man she despises, is to settle down to something possessing all the elements of tragedy.

The art of love necessitates continuous preoccupation with repairing the ravages of time and illness; it necessitates daily touching up and tinkering with physiognomical and anatomical deficiencies. An ugly man is bad enough; an ugly woman is positively repulsive. Little wonder that the younger Dumas presented woman as evidence of Jehovah's weariness at the end of his creative task!

The human body, unfaked and undecorated, is

MARRY OR BURN

monstrously inconcinnant. In comparison, a tiger, or a peacock, or a leopard, or a lion, is incredibly beautiful. Specimens of the genus *Homo sapiens*, both male and female, even in the perfection of health and youth, are full of defects. Afflicted with many of the distempers to which they are peculiarly liable, or burdened with the scabrousness of age, they are positively painful to the eye. For instance, imagine a youth with pustulo-crustaceous; a girl with idiopathic anæmia; a man of forty with erysipelas; or a middle-aged woman with arthritis deformans.

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT MARRIAGE IS

THERE seems small room for doubt that originally human beings were as promiscuous in their love-making as so many cats. It is true that for years sexologists, anthropologists and sociologists have engaged in heated and venomous disputes as to whether or not promiscuity was the forerunner of group marriage; but as Wieth-Knudsen sanely points out, it matters little whether so-called clan marriage or general promiscuity originally prevailed—both were actually promiscuous intercourse. The question whether six members of a clan shared one woman, or whether six hundred men took their turns with one hundred women is a point not worth debating.

University professors, in the main, are apt to get out of touch with life. For this reason the bulk of the treatises on sociology and especially on marriage waste thousands of words in presenting

MARRY OR BURN

theses that are not only worthless, but senseless to boot. To get at the truth it is necessary to bear *in mind the sexual proclivities of mankind*. The root of the whole thing is expressed in a vulgar aphorism which, amplified and euphemized, may be stated as when once it is aroused sexual passion has no conscience and laughs at taboos or regulations.

It is doubtful if love, in any except a momentary physical sense, enters into primitive sexual intercourse. Originally in humans, as amongst lower forms of animal life, coitus was purely tropistic, and there would seem strong grounds for believing that the sex act was performed as openly and unashamedly as it is amongst dogs and fowls. In the writings of antiquity there are references to primitive races in which the sexes "coupled as publicly as beasts."¹ So did the Adamites and the Tarlupins. So, too, did Absalom, according to the story in the Second Book of Samuel. The splitting up of races or tribes into groups or clans resulted in each group having its own batch of women, which were common property. Thus polyandry was customary amongst all

¹ *Herodotus*, Book III.

WHAT MARRIAGE IS

primitive races and was the precursor of polygamy. Polyandry is the natural condition of woman in all poor or weak clans.

All through the ages the key to the matter has rested in the economic position of man. Man is naturally polygamous, but seeing that he is, with relatively few exceptions, averse to polyandry in his women, looking upon his chosen females as private property, the extent to which he can indulge in his polygamous desires is limited by his wealth or power. In primitive races he could procure women by capture, by purchase, or by joining a clan and having his share of its collective females. Thus, in all poor and weak races, for the bulk of the men, the clan system was the only feasible one. Chieftains alone were in a position to capture or buy wives for their own exclusive use.

Incest was rife. It was bound to be rife under a system where parental identification was dubious. Not only in primitive races was incestuous intercourse common, but in all the early civilized communities was it the mode. The ancient Egyptian kings revelled in it. Rameses II married a couple of his own daughters; Cleopatra took for spouse

MARRY OR BURN

her own brother; Attila married his daughter; Artaxerxes, not content with one, took two daughters to his bed; even Abraham married his half-sister.

II

It is necessary at this juncture to glance briefly at the phallic significance of the religion attributed to the Hebrews. This phallicism finds no mention in theologic works, in the pulpit, in the gutter press, in books or periodicals destined for consumption by peasants: the actual phallic references so plentifully besprinkled throughout the Hebrew script have been replaced, as far as possible, by euphemizations and falsifications in the English, Greek, Latin and other translations of the Holy Writ. According to the Second Book of Moses, called Exodus, the God of the Hebrews, as to whose name Moses was so curious on His initial appearance in a burning bush, later revealed Himself as Jehovah. Now, as any student of the Old Testament well knows, this name Jehovah rarely appears in the English text, "the Lord" or "the Lord God" being the title given to the Creator in the many thousands of references

WHAT MARRIAGE IS

made to Him. But a consultation of the original Hebrew text reveals a strangely different story. God is there referred to variously as Yahveh, El, Elohe, Yaho and Adonai. And a little research reveals the reason behind these queer hole-and-corner antics of the translators of the Bible.

There is a popular idea that the collection of stories and legends which go to the making of the Bible, and which, by the way, have about as much authenticity as the *Arabian Nights*, as *Robinson Crusoe*, as *The Swiss Family Robinson*, as *Gulliver's Travels*, as *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, as *The Surprising Adventures of Baron Munchausen*, were dictated or revealed by God to Moses and various other scribes, who wrote down on the spot the divine words; as analogously, in later years, did Swedenborg and George Fox, and John Wesley, and Daniel David Home, and Mrs. Eddy, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, all of pious memory. Actually, Moses and his contemporaries, supposing they ever lived, could not write; and neither at that time nor at any other time was there any Hebrew language. According to the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, the Hebrew language never existed as a language: it was merely

MARRY OR BURN

a symbolism and was unspeakable. It is notable that, on the authority of the *Catholic Encyclopædia*, the word Hebrew occurred "for the first time in the Greek prologue of Ecclesiasticus, about 130 B.C." It is further significant that the first translation of those of the Hebrew scriptures then existing was commenced about that time. In short, there are the strongest grounds for the suspicion that not only was the Old Testament itself a compendium of fairy tales culled from the mythology of various pagan nations, but that the "original tongues" from which it is supposed to be translated were fabrications of the Roman clergy and scholars, for the express purpose of imposing upon the world, as God's words and commands, the then prevalent Roman cosmogony and religion.

In reality these mythical Hebrews were pagans worshipping the same deities as did their neighbors, and it is this paganism, with its plurality of gods, that the later translators of the Bible wished to suppress. The Canaanites, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, the Assyrians, and others, with their Yahveh, El, Elah, Ilu, Bel, Baal, Allah, *et al.*, despite the statements of the-

WHAT MARRIAGE IS

ologians to the contrary, were all referring to the same god.

To avoid confusion I shall continue in these pages to refer to the mythical pagans who were supposed to co-exist with the mythical Moses, and which people the pages of the Old Testament, as Hebrews. What I wish to make clear, as it has an important bearing on the whole affair, is that the thought, religion and philosophy of these Hebrews from the creation, some four thousand years before, until the time when the Hebrew script saw daylight, were precisely the thought, religion and philosophy of the Roman clergy flourishing in the century before the appearance of Christianity.

At this time, not only the Roman nation, but also every other race on earth, were steeped in the phallicism that is one of the roots of religion. The sun, the moon, the sky, the earth and the stars, personified as a thousand differently-named gods and goddesses, through the ages, were worshipped by man the whole world over. In this there is nothing strange. That these unknown, mysterious, powerful, terrifying forces should constitute an anthropomorphic polythe-

MARRY OR BURN

ism was inevitable, with in some cases the sun-god, in others the sky-god, as the creator. In every mythology the creator is the hegemonical power: the act of creation the supreme attribute of the deity. Jesus Christ was a sun-god, the early Christians were sun-worshippers. Christ's birthday, symbolical of the sun's re-birth after the winter solstice, is identical with that of the sun-gods in other mythologies: Osiris, Adonis, Buddha, Mithras, Bacchus, Krishna, Hercules, Horus, Indra.

The Hebraic trinity, like that of the Egyptians, the Hindus, and, later, the Christians, were purely phallic. The Phœnicians, the Egyptians, the Hebrews, referred to the penis as the opener, the upright, the powerful; symbolizing their respective gods, Asshur, Ptah, Jehovah. There is evidence of this phallicism throughout the Bible. Thus:

“And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb. And she conceived and bare a son.” (*Genesis* xxx. 22–23.)

And thus:

WHAT MARRIAGE IS

“And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh.” (*Genesis* xxiv. 2.)

And again:

“And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me.” (*Genesis* xlvii. 29.)

And yet again:

“We have given the hand to the Egyptians, and to the Assyrians, to be satisfied with bread.” (*Lam.* v. 6.)

Each of these and other references in the Old Testament to the “thigh” and the “loin” are actually references to the penis, it being the custom of the Jews of that time to swear on oath by laying the right hand on the penis, much as to-day we hold the right hand aloft or lay it on the Bible. It was because of this veneration for the generative organs of man that laws were put into the mouth of God ostracizing those whose organs were physiologically imperfect or had suffered some form of injury. Thus:

MARRY OR BURN

“He that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord.” (*Deut.* xxiii. 1.)

Even to-day the Catholic Church calls for and satisfies itself as to the soundness “in all their parts” of those who desire consecration as priests.

Side by side with the Hebrew trinity of Asshur, Anu and Hea, arose the female consort Ash-toreth. As the penis was representative of Asshur, so was the vulva representative of Ashtoreth. To the conjunction of penis with vulva, in other words, the entrance of the male “staff of life” into the female “door of life,” was given the name asherah, symbolized in Assyrian sculpture as the “tree of life,” and universally represented by the cross.

III

Ancient ideas respecting the procreative act were necessarily hazy. To realize this we have only to read the book of Genesis, representing the prevailing state of knowledge, not at the reputed period of six thousand years ago, but somewhere about the time of Christ, when the book was actually written. The androgynous concept

WHAT MARRIAGE IS

of God was the essence of the anthropomorphic cult. Adam, conceived by God in the likeness of Himself, was looked upon as a hermaphrodite. The mechanism of conception was unknown to the ancients. Indeed, it was not until as comparatively recently as 1677 that Leeuwenhoek discovered that the union of spermatozoön and ovum was essential to fertilization.

Thus amongst all primitive races, where any ideas on the matter were entertained at all, they were crude to a degree. A careful examination of the first chapter of Genesis reveals the fact that there was much dispute as to how children came into existence. There are the strongest grounds for supposing that Chapter II was the work of a different chronicler from Chapter I. Strictly speaking, the two chapters, instead of forming, as it is popularly supposed, a continuous record of the creation of the world, are two separate accounts of the same act of creation. In Chapter I Adam and Eve are simultaneously created, obviously either coupled together like the Siamese twins or in the form of one hermaphroditic being. In the second chapter Adam was created from the dust, and while he slept, God removed a rib and

MARRY OR BURN

from it made Eve. Here were two distinct individuals.

The cosmogony of Genesis, as is well known to students of comparative religion, is not unique. It conforms more or less to contemporaneous cosmogonies. Thus the Jewish *Talmud* and the Chaldee *Targums* state without equivocation that Adam was androgynous, with two separate faces, and that God split him into two beings. The tomes of the mythology of Greece agree with the first account in Genesis, except that here no one God did the trick single-handed. Prometheus, Zeus, Hephæstus, all had a hand in creating man out of clay, and when their joint task was completed, it was a corpse they had brought into existence: the goddess Athene finished the job by giving to it the breath of life.

Apparently these two separate myths continued to live through the ages, not as rival hypotheses but as alternative explanations of fecundation. The connection of coitus with fertilization was vaguely established, as is seen in the story of Onan's sin. The sole responsibility rested, however, with God and man, the woman merely provided the soil in which the child grew. There are

WHAT MARRIAGE IS

indications of this in God's command: "Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins." The gods, however, had different and unique fecundating powers when they decided to act themselves.¹ It was enough that they breathed into the female body in the manner of the creation of Adam, the hermaphrodite, described in the first chapter of Genesis, and again referred to in the book of Job: "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." This belief was common to every religion of antiquity; it accounts for the stories of virgin birth which besprinkle every mythology. It accounts for the virgin birth of Dionysus, Krishna, Perseus, Buddha, Osiris, Mithras, Attis, Baldur, Quetzalcoatl, Hercules. It accounts for the birth of Christ.

The nine months' interval between conception and birth had probably a good deal to do with the existence of this universal myth—a fact to which

¹ The idea reiterated throughout the pages of the Old Testament is that in sexual intercourse man merely acts as a representative of God; hence God's punishment of Onan. The sin of Onan was this failure to act as God's instrument, and not, as the clergy so tirelessly reiterate, in the practice of *coitus interruptus*.

MARRY OR BURN

may be attributed the Matriarchy amongst many ancient races. To this day, too, it is responsible for the failure of the Australian Blacks to recognize that the male has anything at all to do with the birth of children.

IV

Marriage, after all, is not a fixed concept. It is merely a method, varying according to time and place, of regulating, or attempting to regulate, sexual intercourse in respect to procreation. Marriage is not necessary for procreation: it is merely necessary to prove parentage and to fix the liability for the upbringing of children. Where there *is no necessity to fix responsibility for parentage, morals are much looser, as is instanced by the fact that in all countries where eunuchs are used as guards of harems and for other purposes, despite the fact that castration does not necessarily efface either sexual appetite or ability, these eunuchs are allowed access to women in a free manner that would never be tolerated in the case of men who were unmutilated.*

According to God's laws, death was the lot of

WHAT MARRIAGE IS

any woman who, on the marriage night, was found to be not *virgo intacta*; in many instances a terribly unjust sentence, seeing that the ruptured hymen is not necessarily a sign of loss of virginity.

The Levitical laws, as detailed in the five Books of Moses, proclaimed that the mere fact of a man having carnal connection with a virgin constituted marriage. No ceremony, either civil or ecclesiastical was necessary. Intercourse in itself was sufficient. Celibacy was frowned upon. God's command: "Be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein," was chanted by the prophets, law-makers and philosophers of old. Plato held that everyone should be compelled to marry; Lycurgus restricted the feasts and bacchanalian orgies to married men. The women, probably for reasons of their own, were in favor of compelling marriage; and, according to Athenæus, hammered bachelors lustily with their fists at public festivals.

As conditions improved, polyandry, originally rampant in all primitive races, often through poverty, and sometimes through the practice of killing off at birth the female children, diminished

MARRY OR BURN

or ceased altogether, giving place to polygamy. With the division of communal races into family groups, with the creation of property rights, and the extension of polygamy, opinion turned against polyandry. It became, in many countries, a capital offense.

Polygamy, on the other hand, was a virtue. Despite the teachings of Christianity and the eruptions of Biblical apologists, there is, throughout all the Books of the Old Testament and of the New, no denunciation of polygamy. To the contrary, the great god Jehovah, on more than one occasion, openly encouraged it; and if in the New Testament there are no indications of its actual advocacy, there are just as surely no strictures against it. Abraham, David, Solomon, Josiah, Ibzan, Abdon, Gideon, Esau, Ahab, Lamech, to mention a few, all took wife after wife in efforts to carry out their God's command and do their utmost to litter the available earth with children. God actually gave a bevy of maidens to the sensual old David, who took Abishag when he was tottering to the grave: He even blessed Jacob, whose philanderings exceeded the best efforts of Brigham Young. To Moses and his peo-

WHAT MARRIAGE IS

ple God gave thirty-two thousand virgins, the captive Midian women and children, to be raped at pleasure. Even Moses himself, the pet of Jehovah, was a polygamist, a murderer, and a breaker of his God's laws.

The plain fact was that every woman was expected to replenish the earth, and if the fault was none of hers but of her husband's, then, at his death, any available brother did his utmost to make up the deficiency. Onan had no taste for the *job* and in consequence was killed for his *tergiversation*. This idea of begetting children was instilled into every woman. A barren woman was reviled and mocked. Thus Sarah herself proposed that Abraham should marry Hagar; Rachel said, "Give me children or else I die." Confucius vehemently upheld procreation as the one duty of woman, advising the husband to try another female if his wife proved barren; even Luther, the apostle of Protestantism, upheld polyandry in any woman whose husband proved to be *impotentia generandi*. The Catholic Vicar-General, Craisson, excelled the lot, recommending and justifying the permission by confessors of pre-coital masturbation on the part of the wife.

MARRY OR BURN

The few Christians that to-day read the Bible have difficulty in reconciling the thunderous commands of Jehovah, reiterated throughout the pages of the Old Testament, to spawn the earth with one's kind, with the Pauline doctrine that virginity in woman is a virtue, that celibacy in man is rewarded with God's backpattings and huzzahs. Except on two famous occasions,¹ when he seems to have been napping, St. Paul never varied in his denunciation of marriage as a sin. "It is good for a man not to touch a woman," he cried to the Corinthians in the height of his monkish fervor. Marriage, he says in effect, is an evil, in some cases allowably a necessary evil, as, for instance, where a man is of so sensual a nature that he cannot keep away from women. Then, says Paul, with perhaps unconscious cruelty, let him take a wife as a means of avoiding the more terrible sin of fornication. To use his own words: "But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn." Christ, despite His famous pronouncement as to the inviolability

¹ 1 Tim. v. 14; Eph. v. 23 *et seq.*

WHAT MARRIAGE IS

of marriage, never encouraged wedlock or the begetting of children. To the decided contrary. "Forsake thy wife and follow me," He cried at His recruiting meetings. And again: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."¹ Not content with selfishly exacting this most complete and inhuman sacrifice on the part of His disciples, Christ even went so far, in His cult of asceticism, as to glorify self-mutilation "for the kingdom of heaven's sake." To St. Paul, Jehovah's injunction to multiply was of no importance. And for a very good reason. He was obsessed with the idea that the end of the world was imminent. The need for marriage and procreation was ended—there were no marriages in heaven, but eternal life.

This marked the beginning of a cult of celibacy and asceticism which for hundreds of years was to be the most marked feature of Christianity. Tertullian, Chrysostom, Cyprian, Œcumenius, St. Augustine, St. Jerome, denounced marriage as a sin. They glorified virginity in women and

¹ Luke xiv. 26.

MARRY OR BURN

celibacy in men. The Gnostics hammered marriage with thundering blows; the Valesians, trumpeting Christ's famous saying: "There are some eunuchs which were so born from their mother's womb; and there are some eunuchs which were made eunuchs of men; and there be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake," castrated themselves in the belief that none but eunuchs could enter heaven; the whole lot of them trounced polygamy as a terrible sin, holding that it was forbidden in the seventh commandment of God. The Manichæans went further: they put forth a hypothesis that the origin of all matter, as opposed to spirit, was diabolical and unclean. This was accepted by the Christian Fathers with gusto. And so the game proceeded merrily.

Holding such views, it was but natural that every impediment to marriage that the mind could conceive should be brought into force. The old rules against incestuous marriages ¹ were extended and amplified until all relatives were included in the ban. The next step was the enforced celibacy of the clergy. The object of this was

¹ Leviticus xviii. 6-18.

WHAT MARRIAGE IS

partly to comply with the glorified asceticism of the age, but partly, too, as a means of solidifying the influence of the Church and preventing an added incentive on the part of the Bishops to rob the Church for the benefit of their children and of the children to repeat the process for the benefit of themselves. They had the combined cuteness of a Scotchman and a Jew, these ornaments of the Church. In the fourth century, the synod of Elvira absolutely forbade priests to marry; so a century later did the decretal of Siricius. Women were urged to enter the nunneries and become the brides of Christ; ¹ Salvian preached the doctrine that none, men or women, were holy if they committed the sin of marriage.

But the priests were men, the nuns were women, and despite ecclesiastical thunderings, despite parroted emasculatory bombinations, they had desires, appetites and passions like the rest of us. Thus the celibacy of the clergy failed dismally. The Fathers could prevent the priests marrying: they could not prevent them indulging

¹ To this very day nuns are considered by the Catholic Church to be betrothed to Christ, and must not therefore have intercourse with men.

MARRY OR BURN

surreptitiously in the pleasures of the flesh. Many of them had concubines, openly in some cases, secretly in others; many had recourse to homosexual vice. Church Councils repeatedly passed strictures against the sleeping of virgins with priests; there were scandals in connection with the common practice of the clergy taking with them on their official travels their mothers and sisters. Regulations were issued forbidding two monks or two nuns to sleep in one bed; animals and birds of the female sex were not allowed in the monasteries. Sodomy was rampant amongst the priests throughout Europe at the time of the Norman Conquest of England; it became so ecumenic as to take on the morality of custom, and was officially permitted by Pope Sixtus V in the sixteenth century; while Henry VIII permitted the keeping of concubines.

These sleazy, offuscating, corybantic, ascetic leaders made strenuous efforts to repress their own desires. Thus Tertullian tells of Democritus destroying his own eyesight as he could not look at a woman without becoming concupiscent. St. Eusebius loaded himself with irons to destroy his lecherous feelings; St. Besarion scratched his

WHAT MARRIAGE IS

body with thorns; St. Abraham never washed and became unbelievably dirty; the Talpæ, a Jewish sect, blindfolded themselves to shut out the sight of woman, and for their pains, according to Gerson often got bloody noses through running against walls and other obstacles.

VI

I have already indicated that marriage is not necessary for the perpetuation of the race. The ancient Egyptians admitted no impediments or restrictions whatever. The regulations of Moses provided few; and if they frowned on incest, they allowed polygamy and made the *Leviratsehe* law. It was only with St. Paul's hymning of Christianity that monogamic marriage was instituted as the only form tolerated by God, and at that conceded, not as a praiseworthy condition, but as a necessary evil, much in the way that prostitution is tolerated and frowned upon to-day. In effect the married woman was looked upon by St. Paul and his associates as little better than a prostitute; the sexual act as something ineffably filthy, on a par with the act of defeca-

MARRY OR BURN

tion. In other words, the passion of man for intercourse, either for pleasure or for the procreation of children, was recognized solely as a smutty, stercoraceous affair to be mentioned only in the susurrated accents and euphemistic terminology employed to-day by polite society in referring to the water-closet.

Paul's view of women was a singularly bilious and debased one. It was the view of a snooty, sensuous man of the world, and indeed, despite his admonitions and his stressed celibatistic pose, there are indications ¹ that he was by no means the chaste monk that historical Christianity supposes. Boiled down, the Pauline view was that woman's sole purpose in life was for the performance of the coital act.

This basic idea of the inferiority of woman to man has been common to all religions and nearly all races. It is reiterated throughout the Bible from Genesis to Revelation; the Mohammedans even denied woman the possession of a soul. In A.D. 585, at the Council of Macon, a gathering of bishops seriously and at great length argued as to whether women were actually human beings.

¹ See 1 Cor. ix. 5.

WHAT MARRIAGE IS

Pleasure and progeny are the objects of man's cohabitation with women, says Vatsyayana in the *Kama Sutra*, and this Brahmin doctrine may safely be said to have applied universally until comparatively recent times. No sexual offense against the woman was mentioned in the Pentateuch of Moses. Always is the offense against the man to whom she is married or betrothed. This idea of the woman being a man's property to be used as he thinks fit, is seen in the ancient practice of the Spartans, the Mohammedans and the Greeks, of loaning their wives to other men for sexual intercourse; in Abraham making of Sarah a source of income; in Isaac drawing profit from the loan of Rebecca's body; in savage tribes, such as the Red Indians of North America and the Eskimos, regularly letting out their women on hire. The punishment of adultery by death, as indicated in the Old and New Testaments, was based on this idea of the wife being a piece of property—there was no punishment for adultery on the part of the husband. Not even in England, until as recently as 1885, did the male's adultery, coupled with desertion, constitute grounds for divorce.

MARRY OR BURN

VII

According to Roman law, marriage consisted of living together in the manner denounced to-day by the clergy. No ceremony of ratification was necessary or in vogue. Marriage was precisely as defined in the Old Testament; that is, the mere fact of carnal union constituted wedlock. In other words, *marriage as we know it* is not supported by the Old Testament or the New; it is not even part of Christ's doctrine. The nuptial ceremony as used in all churches to-day was devised by the Christian Church and given a pseudo-scriptural authority. Tolstoy's denunciation of Christian marriage as a myth was justifiable. Indeed, judged by Christian morality and the present marriage laws, Rachel, Hannah and Bathsheba were not only adulteresses, but whores as well; Solomon, Samuel and Joseph were bastards.

We have seen that with the coming of Christianity and the development of asceticism marriage became, if not actually a crime, certainly an immorality. This attitude held sway until the twelfth century, when tentative methods were in-

WHAT MARRIAGE IS

stituted by the Catholic Church to get control over marriage. Some more or less perfunctory sort of control was secured and cunningly extended as generation succeeded generation, until in the sixteenth century the famous Council of Trent imposed upon Christianity ceremonial marriage in accordance with ecclesiastical rites. From that time private marriage ranked as a sin. And then theologic opinion, as is its wont, turned like a giddy weathercock. It had got marriage under its capable priestly thumb; it saw in it a means of extending ecclesiastical power and of bringing coffers to the Church till, and forthwith, it made of marriage, consecrated by a priest, a virtue and a contract; while it denounced as fornication the marriage recognized by God and Christ and universally practiced the world over for four thousand years. Men and women living together without the priestly blessing from then on were living in sin; the children born to them became bastards. What the Church really did, and did to the accompaniment of hallelujahs and bull-roaring encomiums, was to issue licenses for fornication.

More than ever before marriage became a

MARRY OR BURN

trade. What the woman did in many cases, and what her father did for her in others, was to sell to some particular man an exclusive and permanent license to use her body as he thought fit. Strictly speaking, this alone constituted the difference between marriage and prostitution. Marriage until quite recently was simply prostitution sanctioned by law and approved by the Church. It was the sale of the woman, by herself or by her parents, with an official declaration of the sale in the form of a stereotyped ring. Indeed, although the woman's right to commit adultery has always been strongly denied by man, and her transgression severely punished, the right of the husband to sell his wife for sexual use was admitted even in England until comparatively recently. The London Smithfield market, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was thronged with women offered for sale. Even the Church, on occasion, sold deserted wives who were a burden on the parish. But the Church has always had an eagle eye on any scheme calculated to bring doubloons to its till.

The marriage service at present in force in England is based on the original ceremony in-

WHAT MARRIAGE IS

stituted by the Catholic Church. It differs only from its basic forerunner in that it allows divorce and re-marriage; an amplification made by Luther when he brought to life the Protestant religion. It is based upon the old view that the wife is the property of her husband, and that it is essential to the State that the paternity of children should be established. It is a fact that no potent man could bear the cost of rearing all the children he could cause to be born; it is clearly impossible for the State to shoulder such a heavy burden. Thus the need, in civilized countries, for a system of monogamous marriages. It is not that the majority of men are averse to polygamy. They are not. The average man's conception of monogamy is simply one woman at a time. To this extent he is naturally monogamous, and to this extent only. Thus polygamy always exists. It exists openly where religion and law countenance it, as in India; it exists surreptitiously where the law and religion frown upon it, as in England and America. But it is never rampant, as readers of the activities of the Mormons and of Eastern potentates believe. Polygamy is a recreation reserved exclusively for the rich and the powerful,

MARRY OR BURN

whether it be legal polygamy as amongst the followers of Mohammed, or the keeping of mistresses and the creating of bastards under the ægis of Christianity. True, in France, before the Revolution, the king, by virtue of his position, and at no expense to himself, could practice unlimited polygamy, having the right to destroy the virginity of every bride; true, in many countries, priests reserved for themselves this same power; but for lesser individuals the pleasure of indulging in polygamous desires was a costly pleasure. Even amongst the Mohammedans, popular opinion to the contrary notwithstanding, only a definitely limited number of men have ever practiced polygamy.

CHAPTER THREE

CAUSES OF THE DECAY OF MARRIAGE IN TENURE

OF all the factors that are contributing towards the utter pulverization of the married state, no one of them is comparable in effectiveness with the recent rapid decay of religion. There was a time, and it is not so very many years ago, when my horse-laughs at Christianity's anthropomorphic god, my openly avowed disbelief in the authenticity of the Bible, my gibes at the theophanic manifestations described in the New Testament, were received with obvious dismay and polite disapproval: to-day, these same pyrrhonic guffaws have become so platitudinous that I hesitate to give them expression. The schoolgirl of 1930 treats the Adam and Eve confection as she does the story of Cinderella; her brother, by the time he leaves school, has kicked the whole cosmogony of Genesis into the ash-pit. The worshippers at the city temples and the village gospel-houses alike are reduced to a few middle-aged

MARRY OR BURN

spinsters who get thrills out of chasing the vicar and his curates, and a handful of the more bashful youngsters who still employ the house of God as a medium for making acquaintances with members of the opposite sex. But the bulk of the older population no longer make regular church-going a hall-mark of respectability; the majority of the adolescents frankly look upon the dog-collared clergyman as a comic figure. Only on special occasions, such as the Lord Mayor's day, the Harvest Festival, the personal appearance of a theological contributor to the Sunday press, does the populace in its thousands crowd the churches, and even then only the facts that the factories and shops are closed and that there is the chanting of appropriate hymns prevent the congregation mistaking the service for a vaudeville show.

Twenty, or even fifteen years ago, when men and women in the overwhelming main accepted the parson's promise of a heavenly reward for a virtuous life and a fiery hell as the torture chamber reserved for sinning humanity, the adulterer was looked upon with disgust, the divorced man or woman as someone to spit upon. Even the few couples who elected to marry without the blessing

DECAY OF MARRIAGE IN TENURE

of a priest were viewed with glowering suspicion. And in every instance where there was evidence of the slightest haste or secrecy in the tying of the nuptial knot, female acquaintances, for many succeeding weeks, favored the bride with keen scrutiny and did much mental calculating with the aid of a calendar.

To-day all this is changed. Divorce is fashionable, adultery verges on respectability, prostitutes hawking their charms in the market-place are faced with a new form of competition in the shape of adolescents in search of amorous adventure. The clergy stage their piddling shows to diminishing audiences; in their ridiculous clothes and with their absurd posturings they meet with either polite indifference or cynical scoffings; in the marriage ceremony they still chant words signifying enduring bondage which they know are falling upon unheeding ears and are as empty of meaning as the lines of a comic song.

II

I hold most firmly the opinion, despite the abuse that has been poured on my head for its

MARRY OR BURN

promulgation in another place, that few men and fewer women want children. All the rhetoric about woman's mother-instinct is so much twaddle. Hear the learned and famous American, Alice B. Stockham, M.D.:

"Women instinctively long for and desire the office of motherhood. With this desire it is natural that they should wish suitable conditions and circumstances to enable them to perform the office well, to give children a rightful inheritance and to have the sacred office honoured. It is lack of these conditions for maternity that impels women to shrink from it." ¹

And then listen to the equally learned and equally famous Englishwoman, Dr. Marie Carmichael Stopes:

"Every lover desires a child. Those who imagine the contrary, and maintain that love is purely selfish, know only of the lesser types of love. The supreme love of true mates always carries with it the yearning to perpetuate the exquisite quality of its own being, and to record, through the glory of its mutual creation, other lives yet more beautiful and perfect." ²

¹ Alice B. Stockham, *Karezza, Ethics of Marriage*, Chicago, 1896, p. 57.

² Marie Carmichael Stopes, *Radiant Motherhood*, 1920, p. 11.

DECAY OF MARRIAGE IN TENURE

And yet another kernel from the same granary:

“It is commonly said that most women marry for children, and not out of a personal love, and that there is more truth in this saying than is good for the race. To-day, alas, many women cannot find the perfect and sensitive mate their hearts desire, and they hope in *any* marriage to get children which will mitigate the consequent loneliness of their lives. . . .

“Few girls have not pictured in day-dreams the joy of holding in their arms their own beautiful babies.”¹

I could reproduce, from the works of these and other writers, yards of blowsy rubbish to the same effect, but the examples given are typical, and they are, in all conscience, enough. Dr. Stopes is giving out the same hodge-podge of balderdash that the toshy Victorian novelists of the Emma Jane Worboise school put into the mouths of their heroines.

There is no such thing as an instinctive desire for children. Neither in woman nor in man does it exist; any more than there exists in woman an instinct to darn socks or in man to wear trousers.

The fact that fifty years ago almost every married couple promptly commenced breeding,

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

MARRY OR BURN

and often enough filled the house with youngsters, was no evidence that either mothers or fathers adopted this course through sheer unadulterated joy at the prospect of perpetuating their kind. To the decided contrary, there were at work in favor of childbirth, many compelling factors altogether unconnected with maternal instinct or other antic hokum. For one thing, in those days, the breeding of children was a paying proposition; for another thing, the bulk of the people had little acquaintance with the art of avoiding conception. Again, the inhabitants of civilized countries were far more fertile than they are to-day. I know it is the custom of doctors, of patent health food manufacturers, of society journalists, *et al.*, to enlarge on the strikingly superior health of the modern girl, to point fingers of scorn at the eighteen-inch-waisted ladies of the Victorian age. But how big a percentage of the women of fifty years ago were walking fashion plates? A precious small one, I venture to submit. The bulk of the women of those days were as strong and healthy as are the majority to-day—there was no grandmotherly State to coddle and wean into a precarious exist-

DECAY OF MARRIAGE IN TENURE

ence infants who would be better dead. And neither men nor women lived on canned milk and fruits, nuts, preserved meats, iced buns, chocolate, et cetera. On the modern tea-shop diet Reynolds and Macomber found the phenomenal breeding powers of rats reduced to zero; the same applies to other animals; and it is no presumptuous analogy that such a diet is making many a woman of this decade as barren as Sarah.

Another factor which had considerable effect on the birth-rate was the belief that the divine purpose of marriage was procreation. Before the decline of religion already noted, the clergy hammered this Biblical injunction into the heads of the people. Allied to some extent to this religious belief, and operating in a very large number of marriages, was the wish, on the part of the male partner, to provide evidence of his potency. Twenty years ago the married man who could not, at the end of eighteen months of wedlock, trot out a child, was compelled to provide a true or fictitious tale of his wife's barrenness to put an end to the stream of lewd jokes indulged in by his fellows. The best tribute to his powers was the regularity with which his wife became

MARRY OR BURN

enceinte. It was just such a desired reputation for sexual prowess and salacity, just such a dread of sniggering persiflage, that induced Walt Whitman's consistent anonymous emphasis on the productiveness of his amours!

All this has been changed. Together, the scoffing at the clergy's edict and the ecumenity of birth control, have brought about a revolution. Admittedly, birth control was widely practised long before religion suffered its sensational decline. But it was not practiced anything like so completely or so thoroughly as it is to-day. There were not so many methods, and what methods did exist were cruder and by no means so widely known. But this only partially reveals the secret. People love to compromise. They accepted, these millions of respectable morons, the Biblical injunction that the purpose of marriage is procreation. But they bilked at the notion of unlimited procreation. Thus the one-child marriage became popular. It became popular with the man as well as the woman, as it provided, in the new circumstances, adequate proof of the husband's potency. With winks and nods and humorous references to birth control, there was always available

DECAY OF MARRIAGE IN TENURE

a plausible explanation for future freedom from accouchements. There is, of course, the other side to the story. The man is no longer, in order to keep his wife occupied at home, so easily able to saddle her with children she does not want. There is a story in the *Facetiæ of Poggio* in which a husband threatened to punish his wife by filling the house with children and then forsaking her. To-day I fear any such threat would be greeted with derisive hoots.

With the final downfall of religion and the raising of birth control into a fashionable cult approved by moralists, by eugenists, and even by members of the priesthood, the last scruples of the married have vanished. *Plura faciunt homines e consuetudine quam e ratione.*

Now it is an indisputable fact that the childless marriage is in greater danger than is the marriage that has resulted in a crop of youngsters. With all the insouciance, the cynicism, the ennui of the age, men and women in the huge main still retain, where children have blessed or cursed the union, some reluctance to unloosen the marriage knot. True, on the other hand, youngsters cause unhappiness, as I shall demonstrate in another

MARRY OR BURN

chapter. But unhappiness *per se* is not always, or often, a cause of divorce. The very love for a child which has produced unhappiness may cause a woman to cling to her husband; whereas any one of nine hundred and ninety-nine other brands of unhappiness, where no child is existent to cement the union, may send it tottering to its doom. For this reason alone birth control may be set down as one of the most potent causes of divorce.

III

But although the existence of children still represents an influence tending to keep marriage existent, it is, I fear, a crumbling influence. Time was when children, apart from those of the limited wealthy class, shared the home life of their parents, were under their mother's nose for the major part of the period between birth and adolescence. The majority of parents knew their children intimately. To-day they do no such thing. An enormously greater proportion of the populace are sufficiently prosperous to send their youngsters to boarding-schools and colleges. If the parents see their children at all it is sketchily

DECAY OF MARRIAGE IN TENURE

during holidays. Little wonder these youngsters, on attaining manhood, are comparative strangers to the man they call father. In infancy they are much closer to their nurse-girl than to their mother; in adolescence they know better their chums and teachers. There remain the considerable number of parents who keep their children at home with them. Here, strange as it may seem, the position is very little different. For home life is disappearing. Not, as formerly, is the home looked upon as a place in which a married couple are anxious to spend as much of their time as possible; but, to the decided contrary, as a place to get away from whenever opportunity offers. The head of the family has hardly got into his motor-car or climbed on a bus before his wife is donning her finery. She spends her days in the movies or gawking into the shop windows; the moment her husband has swallowed his evening meal she is hawking him to a theatre or a dance hall. Simultaneously parents have been relieved of most of their responsibility for their children. The State educates them, physics them, looks to their teeth, provides them with spectacles. It psycho-analyzes them: in many instances it feeds

MARRY OR BURN

them, and if occasion demands, I dare say it dis-infects them. It teaches them, along with a lot of useless knowledge, to cheek their parents, to rebel at all discipline; it even, if the parents attempt to chastise or to remonstrate with them, steps in and prevents any such corrective measures.¹ The result is that as the parents come in at one door of the house the children go out at the other; the mother sees little of them, the father less. A slight extension of this State interference, a little more encroachment on the parents' diminishing crop of duties, and I can well imagine the majority of fathers not knowing their children when they pass them in the street.

All this obviously has a disruptive influence upon the stability of family life. The family precedes marriage. The marriage contract, civil or ecclesiastical, was made with the object of founding and stabilizing the family. It was made at a

¹ The following report is taken from *The Daily Mail*, March 17th, 1930: "William Drewery Hurd, Linnaeus Street, Hull, who was arrested on a warrant taken out by his daughter, Edith Eleanor Hurd, aged 25, was bound over for six months at Hull on Saturday on a charge of assault. Miss Hurd alleged that her father smacked her face and pulled her hair. She applied for the warrant for his arrest, she said, because he threw a summons in the fire."

DECAY OF MARRIAGE IN TENURE

time when childbirth was the great object of marriage, and the contract had as its aims not only the inviolation of the union itself but the identification of the child's parents. Thus, with the turning of so many marriages from procreative unions into mutual masturbatory parties, the matrimonial contract, as we shall see later, becomes to a big extent superfluous.

IV

Other disruptive influences are busily at work. Whether for good or for ill there has, in recent years, been a decay in sentimentalism staggering in its extent and universal in its scope. If you doubt this statement visit the theatre or the movies and observe closely the reaction of the audience to the play or the film. I greatly question whether *East Lynne* would dampen more than half a dozen handkerchiefs in the stalls today; I very much doubt if the most emotional scenes in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* would draw so much as a sigh.

This greater realism is having its effect on the incidence of divorce. And particularly with

MARRY OR BURN

women. Years ago, H. L. Mencken, in a brilliant analysis of woman, demonstrated that the female partner to the matrimonial union was possessed of infinitely greater realism than was her mate. Recently, in a most instructive inquiry, Messrs. Hamilton and Macgowan produced evidence that fewer women than men were willing to continue with an unhappy marriage for the sake of the children, thus supporting with direct evidence Mr. Mencken's thesis. But there is every reason for thinking that year by year man, too, is becoming less liable to allow sentiment to weigh with him in the matter.

With this decay of sentimentalism, and its corollary, the cult of realism, much of the *éclat* of love has vanished. Love is founded on fiction, on mystery. True, with marriage, much of this mystery, this fiction, speedily and inevitably goes to glory; but the young set of to-day doesn't even wait for marriage to dispel these illusions: they go to the altar with the mysteries already scattered. And every step forward tends to pull the curtains aside for another peep. Nothing, for instance, is more likely to destroy the attractiveness of man for woman, or woman for man, than

DECAY OF MARRIAGE IN TENURE

to see a human being stark naked. The reason for the more moral attitude of many animals and savages is here recognized. No wonder the practitioners of *Nacktkultur* in Germany pride themselves on their morality: it would be an individual possessed of singularly little æsthetic culture, and sex-starved at that, whom one can imagine falling for anyone resembling the grotesquely hideous creatures portrayed within the covers of the books devoted to this modern nudity cult.

Somewhere or other, George Jean Nathan recommends that anyone who marries should choose for his partner an orphan. And anyone with experience of a wife's relations will agree wholeheartedly with the advice. For with exceptions so few as to be negligible, a wife's relatives, be they four or forty in number, batten on her husband like so many barnacles. They invade the sanctity of his domain, they intrude on his privacy, they put rebellious ideas into his wife's head, they help her most industriously to spend his money, and generally they do their utmost to

MARRY OR BURN

make his life a hell and his marriage a failure. He cannot, without grievously offending his wife, turn them out; he cannot even refuse them future hospitality. At the same time he cannot allow them to visit him without destroying his happiness. In consequence, whatever he does the disruption of his home is certain.

There is a widely held belief that poverty is influential in causing the unhappiness which often leads to the dissolution of marriage. Nothing could be farther from the truth. To the contrary, it is not poverty, but prosperity, that causes divorce. And the reason for this calls for no diligent search. The peasants of all countries are notoriously contented. They are contented because they have no time to be anything else. The man comes home from his work late in the day; he is tired out and he sleeps like a log. The woman is in little better plight. They know nothing different from this life of alternately working and sleeping; and, in consequence, they don't sigh for anything better. But let them once taste the delights of prosperity and the tale is a different one. They will be forever sighing and fretting for another sip of the nectar they have

DECAY OF MARRIAGE IN TENURE

tasted and enjoyed. The girl who has never entered a theater rarely experiences any desire to enter one; once inside she longs for a repetition of the pleasure. Thus, as people grow more prosperous they become more discontented and their discontent develops in direct proportion to their prosperity. Let a poor but happy couple come into a fortune or win a sweepstake and the speedy end of their happiness is inevitable.

CHAPTER FOUR

CAUSES OF THE DECLINE IN POPULARITY OF MARRIAGE

MODERN marriage is for the male an increasingly costly affair. Attached to it are the expenses usually associated with something in the nature of a luxury, and man is rapidly discovering that its reputed pleasures are, in the majority of instances, dubious, and by no means pleasures which he cannot taste at more moderate cost. Twentieth-century girls, or at any rate, such of the breed as are pleasing to the eye, have been reared in an atmosphere of extravagance. Many of them work and have sums to spend on bedecking their bodies that to their mothers, at similar ages, would have appeared colossal. Those who don't work have commensurate sums lavished on them by generous and doting parents. The result is that the courting of the typical modern girl makes ruinous holes

DECLINE IN MARRIAGE POPULARITY

in a young man's weekly exchequer. Gone are the days when the suggestion of a country walk would be met with acclaim: to take a girl out for a single evening consigns to glory the week's spending money of the average youngster. It is the movies or the theater, with supper and a dance to follow. All of which plainly encourages philandering. No girl of the modern set is content with one glorious evening out of a drab week; she expects her boy friend to repeat the entertainment nightly, and if he doesn't wish to, or can't, she has no scruples in attaching herself to other consorts.

It may be argued that this craze for enjoyment only applies to the wealthy and cultured classes, and that therefore my argument is faulty. But the contention is erroneous. It did, admittedly, so apply a matter of twenty years ago; and to a considerable degree, ten years ago. But not to-day. The higher standard of living of the lower classes, the educative influences of the daily and Sunday tabloids, of the radio, and of the movies, have together produced more changes in five years than have occurred in any previous hundred. The shop-girl is upholstered

MARRY OR BURN

like a nineteenth-century duchess, the weaver prances about the streets in silk stockings and high-heeled shoes, and, so long as she contrives to keep her tongue behind her teeth, may pass with ease for the daughter of a stockbroker, or a doctor, or a University professor.

Not unnaturally any extended experience in philandering is sufficient to show the youth of sense that tastes of this brand are going to play havoc with the contents of his weekly pay envelope. Not unnaturally, too, the time quickly comes when he looks with disgust on the gold-digging proclivities of the modern girl, when he begins to tighten his purse strings at her approach. In consequence he is becoming more difficult to ensnare into matrimony. It is true, as I shall endeavor to show later, that the sophisticated girl does not betray the keenness for setting up housekeeping that her mother did, that marriage is not the only trade open to her; but the reason for the diminishing marriage rate does not lie, as so many think and as the feminists aver, so hugely in the disinclination of woman to enter into matrimony as in the increasing ability

DECLINE IN MARRIAGE POPULARITY

displayed by eligible young men in avoiding capture.

II

There was a time when a man who wished to indulge his amorous propensities had to marry or to form temporary alliances with recognized daughters of joy. In either case it was an expensive business. Moreover, there were circumstances that, with a huge number of men, weighed down the scales considerably in favor of marriage. For one thing, there was man's natural fear of consequences, which caused a considerable proportion of youngsters, with the dread of contracting a loathsome disease big in them, to fight shy of the temptations spread abroad by meretricious *filles de joie*. Even apart from this dread of disease, the elaborate precautions necessary in the case of so many men rendered the tasting of illicit joys a stupendously difficult affair. Thus, what with the village deacons, the Sunday-school teachers, and the Y.M.C.A. youths, who were all scared stiff at the horror of syphilitic infection; what with the bank clerks

MARRY OR BURN

and the 'decorative public officials who sweated vertiginous fear at the mere notion of being seen in the company of painted girls or creeping from a bawdy house; a big proportion were kept pure, or had to be content with the restricted pleasures of masturbation. Only the debauched, the wine-bibbers, the expectorating adventurers, were willing to take the risks. The bulk of mankind was compelled, willy-nilly, to confine itself to philanderings with girls of respectability. Even in these instances any signs of lapses from virtue were sufficient to scare away most youths: the possibility of biological consequences following amorous experiments was ever in the mind of the average young man. As a result of all this the youth was in a state of tension and excitement, and when he saw clearly that the only way in which he could relieve that excitement was by marriage, he quickly fell before the attack of some enterprising girl.

Many recent developments have together sufficed to alter all this. Foremost in the list is the lowering of the standard of virtue in the girls themselves. Indeed, there has developed an astounding state of affairs. The virgin is becom-

DECLINE IN MARRIAGE POPULARITY

ing a rarity. Woman is on a parity with man. She justifies her heterodox attitude by pointing out, sanely enough, that she has just as much right to indulge in extra-marital adventure as has man. The recent European War saw the beginning of a tremendous lowering of woman's virtue. Young girls and grown women, under the stress of patriotic hysteria, gave themselves without stint or reward to the soldiers. Thousands of carefully nurtured young women, with the consent of parents afflicted with the war phrenitis of the day, entered into a service whereby they became, under euphemized names such as Red Cross nurses, W.A.A.C.'s, *et al.*, in reality, what in other ages would have been bluntly described as camp followers.

The battle cry of the advanced feminists of to-day is equality with men in every phase of life, with particular emphasis on sexual adventure. It is the theme of many popular novels. Ann Devison, the heroine of Mr. Gerald Hopkins's story *Seeing's Believing*, is a depiction of no rare character. She has a liaison with a married man, Micky Tarleton, and ends by leaving her parents' home to live with him, expressing neither

MARRY OR BURN

shame nor resipiscence. Ann Devison's outlook is typical of that of thousands of young women. There is evidence for the seeking of the prevalence of this attitude sufficient to fill huge tomes. Judge Ben Lindsey provided enough to convince the most hardened sceptic. Hamilton and Macgowan, in their analysis of one hundred marriages,¹ revealed the fact that thirty-five of these wives were not virgins when they walked to the altar. The results of an examination of one thousand unmarried American women by Dr. Davis, is summarized by V. F. Calverton:

"Of these 1,000 women, only 288 denied having had any experience with sexual intercourse, homosexuality, or masturbation; 53 did not answer at all; 659 of these women, then, admitted having had one form or another, some all three, of these sex experiences; 603 of them stated that they had practised masturbation; 184 admitted having had homosexual relations, with physical expression; and 105 answered that they had had sexual intercourse." ²

The extension of birth control knowledge has indubitably had much to do with the bringing

¹ Hamilton and Macgowan, *What is Wrong With Marriage?*

² V. F. Calverton, *The Bankruptcy of Marriage*, p. 116.

DECLINE IN MARRIAGE POPULARITY

about of the present state of affairs. The girl is no longer deterred by the fear of an unwanted child. Rightly or wrongly, she thinks modern knowledge enables her to avoid any such catastrophe. Similarly her lover is not haunted by fears of scandal and the possibility of being forced into a hurriedly consummated marriage.

Following inevitably from the extensive inroads by amateurs into the prostitute's profession is the decrease in the number of *filles de joie*. Naturally no man is keen on paying for what he can secure gratuitously; naturally too, apart from the question of expense, he is averse to taking unnecessary risks, real or imaginary, of contracting disease; finally and importantly he prefers to gratify his desires with one for whom he has some liking and affection than with one who is available to every yokel who can pay the price and who probably comes hot from another man's embrace.

The net result of all this is a tremendous decrease in man's embracing of marriage. Unpalatable though to many the fact may be, a huge number of men in the past entered wedlock because the marriage act was a license for satyria-

MARRY OR BURN

sis. There are still a not inconsiderable number who are unwilling to indulge their sensual appetites, except by unsatisfying masturbation, outside marriage. Of such are clergymen, deacons, Sunday-school superintendents, moralists and reformers generally. But each year sees an increase in the number who are influenced by no such scruples. They welcome woman's cult of sex freedom with gusto, these sophisticated young men; they are content to deter any thoughts of marriage to the years of senility so long as they can gratify their sexual desires without recourse to professional street-walkers.

III

While marriage still remains for woman the most attractive profession, it is no longer the *only* profession. The entrance in ever-increasing numbers of women into business and professional life is having revolutionary effects. Though it is not true that the modern girl prefers a career to marriage, the fact that it is now possible for her to maintain herself independently of man, has made her a good deal more

DECLINE IN MARRIAGE POPULARITY

particular in her choice of a husband. Gone is the time when she would accept gleefully the first idiot who proposed to her. Relentlessly she still stalks her prey, but she is far more fastidious in the choice of the prey to stalk.

She calls for some attractiveness on the part of her consort. She is inclined to be critical of his physiognomy, his manner of walking, the condition of his finger-nails, his speech and terminology, the color and pattern of his tie, the contour of his hat, the way he holds his knife and fork. In short, she is looking for something more than a human being wearing trousers and able to provide her with bread and jam.

Actually this fastidiousness on the part of the modern girl, in numerous instances, ultimately lands her in a pretty pickle. The young and attractive typist or shop girl finding jobs easy to get, is apt to be a bit above herself. She overlooks the unpalatable truth that youth and beauty are evanescent things. Then one day she wakes up to the fact that the same vanished assets that have lost her any chance of grabbing a husband, have likewise resulted in the loss of her position and reduced her prospect of obtaining another to an

MARRY OR BURN

excessive slimness. Men, whether old or young, look for pretty much the same qualities in their typists and shop girls as they look for in the females they make eyes at in restaurants and at dances. Thus the opening up of opportunities for women in business by no means solves woman's problem; it merely puts it off: a fact which thousands of working women are going to discover in the next few years.

True, a large proportion of the working women of the world are married. There are, for instance, in the United States over two million married women engaged in work of some description. It is fashionable to-day for a wife to have a career. Dead is the old idea that the man who allows his wife to engage in remunerative work of any kind is a man to be sneered at and decried.

All this is part of the wave of feminism that is sweeping over the Western hemisphere like wild-fire. Woman's emancipation, so-called, had its inception years ago, when the need for it was a thousand times more apparent than it is to-day. For however one may disagree with the barbarity of the Levitical concept whereby a wife was a piece of property on a par with an ox, an ass or a bed-

DECLINE IN MARRIAGE POPULARITY

stead; however one may wax wroth over the Pauline idea of woman as a soulless, unclean animal designed for giving pleasure to man in his bed, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have seen the once despised female sex raised upon a pedestal, flattered, fawned over, petted, pandered to and adored. One can well understand a Japanese doctor asking Dr. Wieth-Knudsen: "Why do you European men treat and regard your women with such respect, often amounting to adoration?"

Simultaneously with this *volte face* have sprung into being laws which favor the woman against the man. Shred after shred of authority has been filched from the husband, until in this year of grace 1930, scarcely anything is left. The position was bad enough when Schopenhauer derided marriage as an institution which halved the male partner's rights and doubled his duties; to-day he is in imminent danger of finding himself with no rights at all. The wife's obligations are few. So long as she draws the line at actual adultery, she is safe. Indeed, through the danger of her bringing an action for damages in the face of any such accusation, only a case of the most flagrant kind is likely to arouse comment: on the other hand, she can,

MARRY OR BURN

with impunity, accuse man of an analogous offence.

The old story that the bother of bearing and rearing children is the woman's, no longer has any point. She need have no children she doesn't want. She can waste her time in the movies, in shop-window gazing, to her heart's content; she can philander with ridiculous actors or poets, and, so long as she does it circumspectly, with no fear of anything more serious than a row; she can make fun of her husband to other women, she can neglect her home and her children; she can even run away without incurring the slightest punishment; she can refuse to obey her husband's wishes or listen to his commands.¹

With her freedom, her lack of obligation; with the existence of a chivalry and respect on the part of man amounting almost to silliness, the marvel of it is that woman is not content to let well alone and be satisfied with ruling man by proxy if not by force. If the truth could be got at

¹ The clause in the marriage service wherein the wife undertakes to obey her husband is no longer compulsory. Many women now refuse to give this undertaking, and in the revised Prayer Book it is proposed to omit this and other clauses relating to the subject-state of the wife.

DECLINE IN MARRIAGE POPULARITY

I rather fancy she is, in the prodigious main, so content. The cries for more freedom, for equal rights with men, for sexual emancipation, come not from the married, the charmers of men: they come from sour-visaged spinsters, from raddled widows; in short, with exceptions so few as to be unworthy of notice, from those who are decidedly unlikely, except in the dark, to tempt any man to the making of amorous advances.

In other ways, too, the emancipation of woman is bringing about great changes, and with some of these changes, and the basic ideas behind those responsible for their initiation, I must confess myself in full accord. For generations man has divided women roughly into two great and uneven classes: a small decorative class expressly designed by God for pulchritudinous purposes and for the provision of lustful pleasure; and an infinitely larger working class whose utility was limited to rearing babies and performing housework. Man's outlook was based on the idea, handed down by the ancients, hymned even as recently as the nineteenth century by such men as Darwin and Spencer, that woman is physiologically and psychologically incapable of com-

MARRY OR BURN

peting with man. This basic inferiority, it was contended, rendered her not only physically but mentally immature; that in consequence she was designed by God or nature as a subservient being. J. S. Mill was the first to voice any really serious rebellion against such a viewpoint, but since the publication of *The Subjection of Women* many others have taken up the tale, and to-day there are prominent feminists who assert not only the equality but the superiority of the female sex. To understand the position it will be necessary to digress a little.

Some years ago there was published a remarkable book, the purport of which was to prove that there exists no real reason why the male sex should be dominant; that contrary to popular belief man's boasted superiority is purely apocryphal. It is true that, in their enthusiasm, the Værtings let emotionalism get the better hold; that, as certain critics were quick to point out, much of the evidence given in support of their argument was of an exceedingly dubious nature; but, withal, the thesis has a basic foundation of much solidity, and is very far removed from the nonsensical affair its detractors aver. For instance, one of the

DECLINE IN MARRIAGE POPULARITY

great arguments always brought forward against any theory of equality of the sexes is the hypothesis that women are mentally inferior to men, just as they are physically inferior; that they are bound to continue to be of inferior mentality on the grounds of heredity alone. It is precisely here that the case crumbles to the ground.

Mentality, the opinions of doctors, clergymen, and the public generally notwithstanding, is not hereditary. There is abysmal confusion on this point, and the reason for this confusion in the main lies in the inability to distinguish instinct from habit, and in the general view that abstract qualities are inheritable in the way that a hare-lip or sexdigitism is inheritable. As biologists delve deeper into the mysteries of creation, one after another, the old beliefs shatter to bits. More and more does it become evident that even physiological factors, although hereditary, are from the moment when the fetus becomes viable, if not before, in imminent danger of undergoing modification through the effects of environment on the biochemical processes. By chemical tinkering with the reproductive act in the case of *Fundulus heteroclitus* the progeny will come into the world pos-

MARRY OR BURN

essed of cyclopic eyes. Analogously interference with the residence of the *rotifer brachionus pala* will entirely change its form; tampering with the normal food of the green-fly causes youngsters to be born with fully-developed wings. In all such cases (and many others are citable) environmental interference plays havoc with hereditary physical factors.

Now thought is an abstract conception. For these thousands of years it has been looked upon as something separate from the body. The mystics, the theologians, the metaphysicians have in the past spewed much mush respecting what they were pleased to term the soul, or the spirit of man. Medical men, scientists even, have tintured their attempts to explain the workings of the brain with metaphysics. Thought, the product of the human brain alone, is still noisily trotted out by parsons as a trump card in discussions on science and religion. Stark and solitary, it is the sole surviving evidence of anthropomorphism.

Alas for the hopes of the pious. Recent biological research has disclosed that the brain, and consequently the thoughts produced inside it, are dependent on the physico-chemical processes. They

DECLINE IN MARRIAGE POPULARITY

are dependent on the functioning of the endocrine glands, on visceral processes, on somatic conditions.

It may safely be said that all individuals of the same age, physiologically and morphologically alike, in similar states of health, and subjected to precisely similar environmental conditions, think exactly alike. But, apart from a few cases of twins, so extensive a duplication of conditions rarely occurs. Thus few persons are *naturally* in the precise state necessary for the brewing of identical thoughts. The fact that, despite natural variations, as regards the vast majority, the thoughts of different individuals vary but slightly from a standard norm, is due to the astounding increase in environmental rubber-stamping. The popular press, the movies, the stage, the radio, collectively, are producing herd mentality. Thus most people think alike, cheer the same vapid things, gape at the same ugly sights, run after the same asinine celebrities. So long, that is, as they are in fairly sound health. It is when afflicted with the diseases to which *homo sapiens* is prone that iconoclastic ideas arise. The sufferer from syphilis may begin to question the wisdom

MARRY OR BURN

of democracy; the victim of polyuria will probably be seized with grave doubts respecting the virgin birth of Jesus Christ; the incubus of myelitis may induce the birth of a new metaphysic. Joan of Arc's paranoia changed the history of France, Mohammed's psychopathy enabled him to found a religion, St. Paul's epilepsy was responsible for the coming into being of Christianity, the Fox Sisters' amentia inaugurated a world-wide cult of remunerative boobery.

Naturally, and devoid of any environmental influence, man and woman are unlike. The physico-chemical influences acting on the brain are not identical in the two sexes. But it is quite possible for other factors to obtrude to such an extent as to level up any such fundamental differences; and even, on occasion, to bring about a reversal. And here we come stumbling up against the hypothesis of the Værtings. They give, these Værtings, no explanation such as I have here outlined, but they bring out a shoal of facts which go a long way to prove that the dominance of man over woman is not necessarily a permanent dominance; and further, that in some countries and under some dispensations the male's position was an inferior

DECLINE IN MARRIAGE POPULARITY

one. For instance, according to the writings of the ancients, in many lands the females were originally dominant, taking on the rôles adopted by men in civilized races. The Spartan women, said Plutarch, did the ordering; so too, according to Aristotle, did the Lacæmonians. The women openly committed adultery; the boys, if they failed to get married, were sneered at as being "on the shelf"; male prostitutes were common. So far, indeed, did this reversal of the customary rôles of the sexes go that, says Herodotus, the women stood up to make water while the men cowered on the floor. The famous *Laws of Manu* admitted the woman's right to choose a husband. The Bible provides evidence of a similar nature: Eve took the initiative; Potiphar's wife attempted to seduce Joseph.

Fundamentally the differences in the sexes are not as profound as many aver. There are differences, true enough. There is the matter of size. There is the matter of strength. There are the differences in the functioning of the ovaries and of the testes. Much has been made of the monthly upset in woman due to the menses, but this is largely the result of civilized conditions and the

MARRY OR BURN

teachings of parents and friends. Amongst primitive races there is little such upset. Indeed anyone who has observed uncivilized races, or even peasants of the lowest order in certain European countries, cannot but note that the differences in appearance are scanty. It is civilization and clothes that have brought into being the distinctions we note and talk about.

For nearly nineteen hundred years Christianity held woman in chains. It hammered into her the idea that she was weak, unstable, unclean, born to obey man in all things, that her destiny was to give birth to children and to rear them. It made laws to these ends which man and woman accepted and practiced, gleefully in the one case, dutifully in the other. The rebellion of woman against this dispensation, which rebellion is now in full force, came in the first place through the development of man's chivalry to woman.

IV

The growth of respect for women has been slow. For thousands of years, in early civilization, as the two Testaments and contemporary writ-

DECLINE IN MARRIAGE POPULARITY

ings show, there was no such respect. St. Paul looked on woman as the clergyman of to-day looks on a whore. In many lands there was no virtue in virginity. The Phœnicians handed over the bride to a slave for defloration; in some countries the priest had the right of *jus primæ noctis*; in others it was reserved exclusively for kings.

As civilization advanced the idea of woman solely as a piece of property to be taken or bought by man for the purposes of breeding and of giving pleasure to his most important self, to be sold, loaned or presented to other males for similar purposes, changed. The property right remained, true enough; but slowly and surely man called for more in the woman he took for wife than mere ability to perform adequately the coital act. He wanted, in addition, beauty; and he wanted virginity.

The idea of the act of procreation being a sin and woman an unclean being faded. Simultaneously respect for woman began to gather force. But not for *all* women. This respect was doled out by man to those women possessed of beauty, culture, position, wealth. The results were cumulative. As civilization advanced women in larger

MARRY OR BURN

numbers, through their parentage or through marriage, were in a position to secure the respect of man. But this respect was not for womanhood *per se*. The man who would take leave of a society hostess or his fiancée with respectful obsequiousness would adopt a very different attitude in his traffickings with a woman of the streets. With the close of the nineteenth century, woman had secured a most enviable position. Bit by bit she had obtained in virginity and in the married state concessions which far outweighed the disadvantages attached to her subservience. Hers was a state of subservience which actually was in almost every way superior to that of the dominant sex. For man in his vast respect and devotion had put woman upon a pinnacle and given to her, on the most advantageous terms, very nearly everything she required. It is true some recent concessions, notably the female franchise, were secured only after much agitation, but here the most vigorous reformers shut their eyes to the fact that their economic dependence on man alone made it possible for them to achieve their object.

The cry for woman's equality is largely a superfluous cry. Woman's position to-day is pretty

DECLINE IN MARRIAGE POPULARITY

nearly a perfect one. She competes with man for work while allowing him to pay for her amusements. She is still able to entice him into entering into a partnership which offers her many advantages, and which offers him nothing he could not secure easier and cheaper without relinquishing his freedom. She is able to commit many indiscretions, blunders, and even, on occasion, crimes, with the certainty of either avoiding punishment altogether or escaping with mild censure.¹ She can make physical attacks on a man with little likelihood of any attempt at retaliation; she can be sure of the sympathy of all men in any action for damages in connection with a broken heart,

¹ In giving evidence before the Select Committee on Capital Punishment, as recently as March, 1930, Lord Darling, although expressing the opinion that in the case of deliberate murder he was "unable to give any reason why a woman should not be executed as well as a man," admitted that he could "understand a pardon being bestowed on a woman which would not be bestowed on a man," and further stated, "I remember two women acquitted, and it is my opinion they would not have been if they had not been women."

At a later sitting of the same Committee, Judge Kavanagh of Chicago, in reply to a question put by Dr. Ethel Bentham as to whether he "would make any difference in the punishment of men and women," said, "Yes, I would hesitate to impose the death penalty on a woman, though I cannot tell you why. It is a matter of feeling."

MARRY OR BURN

where in similar circumstances a man would earn cat-calls; she can tell the most astonishing and barefaced lies, and make the most damaging accusations against a member of the other sex with the certainty that they will be believed. The position is unique. It is unique because, almost unbelievably, man, while supposedly holding the dominant position, allows such a state of affairs to exist.

Unfortunately the harridans who prance before their sisters on public platforms, who sprawl their nonsense in the Sunday garbage sheets, who bawl their jejune mush through the ether, who, in search of masochistic titillation, obscenely pose as martyrs in a male-dominated world, are not content to let well alone. In consequence they are in imminent danger of losing for woman in the mass her present most satisfactory status. All over Europe and America she has cheapened herself by competing with the prostitute for men's favors outside marriage. She has adopted every meretricious trick of pose and make-up known to the daughter of joy. The enormous development of the machine age has brought about the standardization of dress, beauty and behavior; as the

DECLINE IN MARRIAGE POPULARITY

news-sheets, the movies and the radio have standardized mentality. Just as the leg-show, through the universality of the short skirt and the silk stocking, has lost most of its one-time attractiveness, so this terrific duplication of beauty is having its effect. The pretty girl is no longer a rarity to be gaped at in admiration, she is to be found by the thousand in every city. Replicas of expensive model gowns and hats are within the reach of the modern working girl; the art of making-up is no longer the secret knowledge of the actress, the courtesan and the society beauty; the accent and terminology of yokels are becoming so rare that societies for their preservation are being formed, and phonograph records of vanishing dialects are being made for the benefit of posterity!

The phenomenal increase in woman's worship of clothes and her patronage of beauty shops is coincidental with similar enhanced interests on the part of man. The young blood is no longer content to parade before admiring and envious eyes his inamorata or his wife dressed up like a circus horse; in addition, he wishes to be something of a prize exhibit himself. In consequence he spends hours and dollars in barbering establish-

MARRY OR BURN

ments where his father spent minutes and pennies; he sports fancy shirts and socks, elegant suits and ties; he wears needle-pointed shoes of a daintiness equal to those flourished by ladies of fashion ten years ago, and which in another decade would have drawn forth the jeers of a sniggering mob. In short, the gallant of to-day is decidedly effeminate; the 1930 girl tends more and more, in all but daintiness of apparel, to masculinity. Many once prominent differences in appearance between the sexes have vanished, or are well on the way to perdition. Gone are the eighteen-inch waists and gone are the big bosoms of women. Gone are the beards, the clumsy feet, of men. The girl drinks cocktails and carries cigarettes in her vanity-bag; the boy eats chocolates in the theater and carries a comb and face-powder in his pocket.¹ More and more, in every

¹ In the House of Commons it was admitted that "out of a total of 72,268 recruits who presented themselves for enlistment in 1929, only 28,131, or 39 per cent., were accepted. Ninety-one per cent. of the rejections were on medical or physical grounds."

Almost simultaneously with these significant admissions comes the report that Soviet Russia is raising an army of five million women. It will be remembered that in 1892 the famous women soldiers of Dahomey met the French troops in actual combat in West Africa.

DECLINE IN MARRIAGE POPULARITY

phase, are girls and young men meeting on common ground. To-day the educated sophisticated girl discusses Joyce's *Ulysses*, tells bawdy stories, comments on birth control, talks about sex appeal, and has probably delved into the case histories of Freud.

Admittedly there is no reason which is not tyrannical against an unmarried woman engaging in work. The fact that she runs a considerable risk of ending her days as a sour-faced spinster glad to do charring is her own affair. The arguments naïvely put forward by men, and for so long accepted by women, that members of the female sex are incapable of doing anything beyond scrubbing the floor, cooking the dinner, selling ribbons and teaching children their A B C's, are unsound. As proof of these arguments, the contention that no woman has ever attained the rank of genius in literature, in art or in the sciences is equally unsound. Woman has rarely distinguished herself, not because such distinction is outside her capacity, but because she has never

MARRY OR BURN

been granted the opportunity. In every walk of life where women have competed with men on an equitable footing and in relatively equal numbers, as many females have got to the top of the ladder as have men; in fact, through their peculiar advantages, more. In instance, the stage and the films. Until recently, girls were never encouraged to take work seriously: it was an admitted fact that the task of woman, or at least of any female whose mentality rendered her capable of anything beyond charing, was husband-chasing. Her parents did not encourage experimenting along other lines, and she herself had no inclination to spend money or time in endeavoring to master a profession which she would be compelled to drop the moment she ensnared a husband. Now, however, all this is changed. A career for a woman, married or single, is fashionable. And I have an idea that, in the next decade, man's long-held idea of woman's incapacity for anything beyond carrying pretty clothes charmingly and proving a pleasurable bed-mate, is going to receive shattering blows.

There is, of course, the other side of the picture. Bluntly stated, the working married woman

DECLINE IN MARRIAGE POPULARITY

makes a poor wife. Feminists may express indignation at this statement, they may hurl verbal brick-bats at my head, but nevertheless it remains the bald truth. The career of the married woman leads, in many cases, to adultery, as I shall demonstrate in a later chapter; it leads, in all cases, to marital unhappiness culminating, often enough, in divorce. It is a stark though unpalatable fact that the financially independent woman, after the passionate honeymoon period has gone to glory, becomes an impossible mate. She makes demands with which her husband cannot concur. His firm refusal meets with his wife's indignant statement that the money she wishes to spend is her own, that she has earned it and will use it as she thinks fit. It never seemingly occurs to the emancipated modern woman that an equivalent attitude on the part of the husband would shear her career of much, if not all, of its glittering charm.

VI

Inevitable in any society where there is a tendency for the women to become masculine and the men effeminate, is the extension of homosexuality.

MARRY OR BURN

While there are always existent a number of congenital homosexuals, the bulk, in countries where sexual perversion of any kind is rife, have acquired the vice. Pedicatio in men and tribadism in women have always been existent, to some extent, in higher circles of society. There has long been a definite homosexual cult in England despite the frownings of the law, as the Oscar Wilde trial revealed. The Lesbian cult, immune from police interference, was marked during the war; it is marked to-day.¹ And although, obviously, no figures can be obtained, it is, I suspect, increasing yearly. It is natural, in the condition prevailing amongst women to-day, that it should increase. A very considerable number of women, through sheer necessity, are compelled to remain spinsters until death. A constantly increasing number elect to delay marriage through fastidiousness in the choice of a man, or through the fashionable love of freedom. The fact that as a result of the open-

¹ The examination into the sex lives of 1,000 American women, conducted by Dr. Davis and to which I have already referred, is revealing. Six hundred and three out of the 1,000 admitted having practised masturbation, 184 confessed to experiencing homosexual relations. (Quoted by V. F. Calverton in *The Bankruptcy of Marriage*, p. 116.)

DECLINE IN MARRIAGE POPULARITY

ing of the professions to and the creation of business opportunities for women, they are no longer compelled to marry as a means of existence, has caused many girls to develop swelled heads and talk much nonsense about their economic independence. This independence has brought in its train various other forms of freedom. The chaperon has vanished; young girls gallivant about alone at all hours of the day and night; they possess sex knowledge unknown to their grandmothers; they have little liking for going to heaven as, according to theologic asseverations, did Mary.

Not unnaturally with all this new knowledge and as a result of the modern outlook, the mysteries of the more esoteric, more hidden, more forbidden and consequently more titillating varieties of sexual vice have been explored. Few, I should say, are congenital homosexuals. Mostly these girls who have delved into the mysteries of sex, and who through being thrown so much together have acquired *faire tête-bêche*, or some other form of sexual vice, have in most cases adopted these practices as alternatives to heterosexual intercourse. After all, even in these days, single women

MARRY OR BURN

who draw the line at actually living with men have limited opportunities for normally securing sexual satisfaction. And appetites once thoroughly aroused are apt to prove tiresome.

VII

The masculinity of woman, the femininity of man, and the development of female homosexuality, together with woman's emancipation, all point to the fact that Matriarchy, if not already in existence, is imminent. Woman is beginning to lose man's respect. What is more, she no longer cares whether she loses this respect or not. It is a point, this, of the most profound significance.

The modern emancipated woman, by virtue of her independence, sneers at man when she does not abuse him. She ignores the fact that her success is largely due to man's sentimentality, which bubbles to the surface and overrides his common sense whenever he is dealing with an attractive woman. It is the attractiveness of woman *in man's eyes* that gives her such a terrific advantage in competition with men, where the awarding of the prizes is in man's hands. All of which woman, her

DECLINE IN MARRIAGE POPULARITY

realism notwithstanding, overlooks, or, as I strongly suspect, deliberately ignores.

The danger woman is faced with is no different from that which confronts man. It is an economic danger. At the moment the world's consumption falls appreciably below its production, and with every improvement in efficiency of the machinery engaged in production the position becomes notably worse. There is not work for all the men in the world, much less for the women in addition. Every woman who enters industry displaces a man: when the day comes that the wife works while her husband prepares the dinner or dusts the drawing-room, it is possible the married woman's insistence on her right to have a career will be decidedly modified, even if it does not vanish altogether. It is one thing to work for money to squander on decorating one's body; it is essentially another thing to find its use restricted to paying the rent and buying coals and margarine.

PART 2
CAUSES OF UNHAPPY
MARRIAGES

CHAPTER FIVE

SEX IGNORANCE

CHRISTIANITY has much to answer for. It has, through its ridiculous taboos, its childish aping of the ostrich, its Brobdingnagian stupidity, done more to promote unhappiness amongst men and women than probably any other single factor. For nineteen hundred odd years man has suffered its yoke. In this enlightened year of 1930, his cynicism, his realism and his agnosticism notwithstanding, he still dances to tunes of its selection, jazzy and camouflaged Christian tunes truly, but Christian tunes nevertheless.

The æsthetic young man may joke about the clergyman's come-to-Jesus collar, the cocktail-drinking girls may discuss free love daringly; but none the less they all subscribe to the Christian doctrine that sexual intercourse outside the married state is a sin, that in any circumstances at all

MARRY OR BURN

it is an unchaste, an unclean, or a vulgar affair to be referred to susurratingly as is the w.c., or to be the subject of bawdy stories. Sex is never referred to respectably outside a scientific, medical, or sociological treatise. The very fact that no one can mention the sexual act without a leer, a smirk or a grin is abundant evidence that the Christian concept of coitus as a dirty, vulgar, secret sin, still lives; that, although St. Paul is looked upon as an old washerwoman, the stigma he placed on sex still endures. In this lies the penchant for erotic literature, the charm of so-called pornography. It is this which induces much thumbing of Bibles; which accounts for the continued sale of *Fanny Hill*; of the boring Firenzuola confections, the puerile Straparola fables, of so sloppy a tale as Elinor Glyn's *Three Weeks*, of so crude a confection as *The Yoke*, and of a host of others.

Actually the moralist's attitude towards sex is the precise attitude to which St. Paul gave expression. It is a ridiculous attitude. It is the attitude given to the world by a neurotic, by one subject to hallucinations; embroidered, amplified and given theologic sanction by a batch of per-

SEX IGNORANCE

verts and hypocrites who imposed upon the credulity of a congregation of morons. It makes of a biological and originally tropistic act, essential for the preservation of the species, supposedly inaugurated by the anthropomorphic god whom man worships, a sinful proceeding. It makes of sexual appetite, which in its ultimate analysis is analogous to an appetite for food and drink, a shameful affair to be referred to with the bashfulness and reticence accorded to cheating at cards, or listening at keyholes, or pinching one's host's cigars.

The Puritan's argument is that erotic and pudic references in books, pictures and conversation conduce to the creation of an unhealthy interest in sex, and may lead a young man to fall into the clutches of a whore, or to the seduction of an innocent girl. This argument may have the slender merit of sincerity, but it has the huge defect of being nonsensical. What young man was ever the worse for seeing an obscene postcard? What girl was ever seduced through reading a book? Every adolescent who walks through the short streets of the Leicester Square district after ten o'clock at night runs the gauntlet of more risks

MARRY OR BURN

to his morals than he will ever encounter through poring over all the obscene art studies turned out of the Paris emporiums; every modern, unchaperoned, jazz-loving dance-club-frequenting Miss, in one month, suffers more damage to her morals than could be induced by reading every obscene book that Anthony Comstock managed to suppress.

As a rule, your true sensual man or woman has little patience with reading erotic novels or looking at pornographic pictures. What prostitute is interested in wading through *Nana*, or *Yama*, or *The Diary of a Lost One*? What stevedore or miner would care to sit through Shaw's *Pygmalion* in order to hear a word he uses a hundred times a day? To the contrary, it is your Little Bethel deacon, or your Y.M.C.A. secretary, who locks up *Droll Stories* with his booze; it is your village clergyman, behind securely fastened doors, who gloats over *A Young Girl's Diary*; it is your grand dame bent on rescuing Magdalens, or your Church bazaar organizer, who sneaks into the lavatory with a copy of *A Night in a Turkish Harem*; it is your temperance lecturer, your mayor, your town councillor, your Sunday-school

SEX IGNORANCE

superintendent, who occupy the front rows at the music-halls and gape wide-eyed at the legs of the chorus girls. They get, these comic puking moralists, a vicarious sexual excitement from reading of the amorous exploits of Casanova; from the pornography of the Second Book of Samuel; from the erotic Song of Solomon; from the spicy indecencies of Beardsley's *Venus and Tannhäuser*. Analogously, there is at the moment amongst the more refined middle and upper classes a craze for reading books besprinkled with expletives and vulgar phrases. It is to this that is largely due the recent extraordinary popularity of many war and historical novels. There is a lady of my acquaintance who spent weary hours wading through *Jew Süss* with the sole object of retrieving from the yards of solid type the few bawdy paragraphs and vulgar words.

Strangely enough, I have never yet met a Puritan who was in any way concerned with the evil effect of pornography upon his own immortal soul; magnanimously and altruistically his heart-aches were always reserved for the other fellow. Apparently himself immune, he could wade through volumes of the stuff he dubbed dangerous

MARRY OR BURN

filth and emerge untainted and unscathed. The tale goes that old Anthony Comstock spent his leisure hours reading to exclusively selected moralistic friends chosen passages from his enormous and unique library of suppressed books.

Unwittingly, through persistently adopting this Puritanical attitude, man insults the intelligence of woman in general and his female relatives in particular. In this connection an experience of my own a couple of years ago is particularly revealing. To a close friend I had presented a copy of my book *The Truth About Birth Control*, and in conversation with him a few weeks afterwards I was amazed to discover that the book was under lock and key and had not been seen by his wife, although she was quite aware of its publication and of a copy being in her husband's possession. The thing staggered me to such an extent that I made inquiries, as opportunities offered themselves, in the cases of six other married men whom I happened to know possessed copies of the book. In each instance the same answer was forthcoming: not one of the wives had so much as seen the covers of the volume. And most amazing thing of all, in several instances the

SEX IGNORANCE

male's confession was unashamedly and without apology made in the presence of his wife: she sat like a worm and never uttered a word of protest. Perhaps I should add that in no case was the woman in question under thirty.

Morality is relative. It is custom endorsed by authority. It is subscribed to by the hordes of people who constitute what is known as the respectable section of the public, not necessarily because they view its restrictions with delight or find pleasure in obeying them, but because to break them is to merit the disapproval of the majority. Conversely those who fail to obey and respect the taboos imposed, or who introduce novel ideas of their own unapproved by authority, are deemed immoral. Thus morality inevitably causes wholesale hypocrisy and lying.

Because morality is only custom it is chameleonic. The immorality of yesterday becomes, often enough, the morality of to-day. The novel which was suppressed in 1900 is accepted as commonplace in 1930. Who could imagine that in France *Madame Bovary* was once proceeded against on the grounds of obscenity; that *Jane Eyre* was hidden away from virgin eyes by Vic-

MARRY OR BURN

torian mothers; that *Three Weeks* was actually suppressed in America; that as recently as 1923, in London, copies of Margaret Sanger's *Family Limitation* were destroyed as obscene literature?

Two years ago attempts to suppress *The President's Daughter* in New York, and *Jew Süß* in Canada, failed, just as a similar attempt in the case of *Jurgen* came to grief some eight years before. And yet the gigantic *Ulysses*, Joyce's phenomenal work of genius, a novel which has probably had more effect on modern literature than any other book ever written, is still banned in England and America; and yet as recently as 1925 the proofs of Gertrude Beasley's *My First Thirty Years* were seized by the police, as in 1929 was the manuscript of D. H. Lawrence's poems. And yet in New York only three years ago, the magazine *Beau* was suppressed and declared "un-mailable" for printing Benjamin Franklin's satirical *Letter to the Academy of Brussels* and Paul Morand's *Finding Your Woman in Paris*. And yet, to-day, Schnitzler's admirably written masterpiece *Hands Around* is banned in the United States, while apparently no one in England cares to undertake its publication. And yet,

SEX IGNORANCE

in 1926, in an English translation of De Maupassant's stories it was deemed expedient to omit a portion of *L'Inutile Beauté*. And yet, in the case of my own serious work, *Sex and Its Mysteries*, published a year ago, it is necessary to restrict its sale to members of the medical, legal, scholastic and theological professions.

To some extent, too, suppression is fortuitous. It may be induced through the tactics of the stunt press, or through the influence of a powerful religious organization, or through the bilious erumpent pullulations of a smut-hound of the James Douglas type. In consequence, to-day a book is banned; to-morrow another equally daring and dealing with the same subject is ignored. Thus in England, *The Cantab*, *Sleeveless Errand* and *The Well of Loneliness* are withdrawn or suppressed; while such contemporary works as *The Wild Party*, *Extraordinary Women*, *Home to Harlem*, *The Mills of Man*, *Siren*, *Bohemian Glass*, *The Rampant Age*, *Ten Ladies of Joy*, *Elmer Gantry*, to name a few, are allowed to go unchallenged. And there are other anomalies. In America, *Replenishing Jessica*, branded obscene in 1925, was approved for public reading three

MARRY OR BURN

years later; in 1927 Herrman's *What Happens* was suppressed by a New York court for featuring a word which in 1929 aroused no comment when printed in the English translation of such a popular novel as *All Quiet on the Western Front*; Paul Morand's story of the nudity cult was omitted from the American edition of the collection of stories entitled *Open All Night*. Little wonder that both authors and publishers are hopelessly puzzled and dismayed when they attempt to discover consistency or sense in the amazing muddle of literary censorship.

II

For so many centuries has the reputed anæstheticism of women been dinned into her ears by theologians, by moralists, by medical men even, that with isolated exceptions mostly beyond the pale of respectability, women themselves have either actually believed the tale or have been led to keep any other views securely behind their teeth. To have openly expressed any doubts respecting the veracity of this doctrine would have

SEX IGNORANCE

been to risk classification with the nightly paraders of Piccadilly.

So ecumenic and so long-lived has been the broadcasting of this tenet that it is little wonder most girls have been ashamed of any outward indications of sexual feeling. Everything connected with sex has been surrounded with such an aura of shame that the biological act upon which the continuation of the human race subsists was considered repulsive and, in many circumstances, sinful. The new-born baby was hailed by friends and relatives with lusty cheers, and congratulations were showered upon its mother; while the act which rendered the baby's existence possible bore the stain of vulgarity.

Thus the Victorian girl, from the moment when she was alarmed at the state of her knickers, was taught to view sex as something revolting and unclean; she looked upon her monthly discomfort as a cross she had to bear, and she was wont to go to her husband like a lamb to the slaughterhouse. To-day, through the growing emancipation of woman, few brides, even though they may retain unruptured hymens, are actual virgins.

MARRY OR BURN

Even where the complete sexual act has been carefully avoided, probably there have been tentative excursions: every youngster seems familiar with *coitus sine immissio penis*.

Man, partly from popular sex books, partly from woman herself, and partly because he wishes to believe it, has accepted the idea of the anæstheticism of woman. It is the outcome of his gulosity for virginity in the woman he loves and marries. For the vanity of man is prodigious; by blatant sophistry he assures himself that he, a prince of his kind, is the only male with whom, submissively and dutifully, his lover or his wife will have intercourse, that to all other men she will turn the frigidity of a eunuch.

To some extent woman plays up to this rhodomontadic male idea, thus helping to broadcast the myth. Just as the man glories in making himself out to be a Don Juan, so does the woman delight in giving the impression that she is an iceberg. Each sex accepts the other at its own valuation in this particular respect. Few girls penetrate the myth that is in circulation respecting man's libidinism; a myth fostered by practically every human being wearing trousers. For, strangely

SEX IGNORANCE

enough, with ridiculously few exceptions, men like to be known amongst their fellows as frequenters of brothels, lecherous monsters capable of prodigious sexual performances on a par with the exploit of Olivier, who in one night repeated the coital act thirty times. Even the deacons, the Sunday-school teachers, the bank clerks and other ultra-respectables, while scrupulously steering clear of conveying any grounds for suspicion of consorting with questionable women, manage to give out the notion that they are popular with the girls. Similarly, few maidens fail to accept the male-manufactured and circulated stultiloquy that in the case of every young man fornication is necessary for his health. It is a belief traceable to old St. Paul's idiotic statement that "it is better to marry than to burn," and his promulgation of the notion that marriage is a necessary evil owing to the universality of fornication. Thus, coincidentally, Christianity has foisted on the world these two antithetic notions of the an-æstheticism of women and the lecherousness of men. The loss of her virginity, outside marriage, marks a woman as unutterably filthy, as one to be sneered at and ostracized; the loss, in similar

MARRY OR BURN

circumstances, of man's virginity as something in accordance with the laws of nature and the wish of God, as something to boast about.

In recent years, viragoes, moralists, white slavery crusaders, feminists, evangelists and others given to coprophagy, have seized on these points and magnified them out of all resemblance to the truth. They have drawn harrowing pictures of shrinking, lily-white girls pursued by sensual, libidinous, lecherous men bent on their seduction and rape. For this men are themselves partly to blame. They have openly and spicily boasted of their prowess; they have suggested gibbous pictures of their sexual appetites. And these haridans have greedily gulped up their stories, accepted them as gospel, and have assumed that these men have only revealed a part of the dreadful truth. But what *is* the truth? Simply that man, despite his desire and appetite, is not the gay spark he makes himself out to be. In the astounding majority men are, as I have indicated in another section of this work, far too afraid of contracting diseases for one thing; they have insufficient funds for another, to do much running after prostitutes. Often enough a peep and perhaps a

SEX IGNORANCE

drink in one of the booze-shops frequented by gaudily-dressed *filles de joie*; or a minute's conversation with a *bourbeteuse* in a dimly-lighted street, represents the extent of the lecherous adventures of these empty boasters. The keenness of competition amongst prostitutes is ample proof of the correctness of this statement.

The strange thing is the rarity with which young men are cautioned against girls, despite the fact that the need for such caution is as huge as it is ecumenic. True, there appeared in the press, during the days of war, some hysteria inaugurated by mothers, sweethearts and wives respecting the dangers besetting lonely soldiers in London and in France; but these dangers were in connection with one class of woman only. Overlooked altogether were the most formidable women—the flappers, the war-workers; in short, the girls of respectability. It is largely owing to the beloved swashbuckling attitude of man that the myth of the male being the sole offender in all sexual offenses flourishes; it is this view that colors the findings of the gatherings of old fogies who in the name of justice scourge young men for seducing girls and assess the damages

MARRY OR BURN

heavily whenever opportunity presents itself. In truth, the seduction of a woman is rare; as most women are themselves perfectly well aware. This is why few sophisticated women have much sympathy with the pullulating tales of man's seductions so frequently told by pregnant servant girls. Those females who constitute themselves protectors of the rights of fallen women, who run rescue homes, who belch ossified inanities respecting man's concupiscence and woman's need for justice and protection, are middle-aged, ugly-faced virgins who could not possibly tempt a drunken soldier, and who, in consequence, know nothing about these matters. It may safely be stated that in not one case out of a hundred does a man even strike up an acquaintance with a strange girl without some encouragement; that in not one case out of a thousand need a girl get into trouble if she does not wish to. In short, that men invariably adopt towards girls the attitude that the girls encourage them to adopt. And if any woman of passable looks doubts these statements let her, the next time she catches a broadcasted smile from one of these so-called bold, brazened, prurient monsters who stand at street corners

SEX IGNORANCE

eyeing pretty girls, ask him in a loudish tone if he hasn't made a mistake, and see him bolt down the nearest alley with his face the color of beet-root and his head hung low.

The popular idea of the frigidity of woman is supplemented and accentuated by the statements of doctors and University professors. Thus Professor K. A. Wieth-Knudsen says:

“Many people will be startled by the statement that a fifth part of all European women are entirely without erotic feeling, and a fourth part again practically without sufficient psycho-erotic capacity to keep pace with Man, much less be a match for him in this sphere; but a number of investigators, especially in Germany, including women doctors, have arrived at similar or even more depressing results. Stegerthal regards at least one-half of all German women as ‘frigid,’ and at least one-half of these are declared to be ‘naturæ frigidissima.’ . . . O. Adler expresses feminine lack of erotic feeling or deficient sensibility by the term *Anæsthesia totalis et partialis*, and estimates these combined classes at 40 per cent., agreeing approximately with us.”¹

With all due respect to the learned professor and the authorities he quotes, this is plain bosh.

¹ K. A. Wieth-Knudsen, *Feminism*, p. 106.

MARRY OR BURN

Schopenhauer, despite his misogamy, came a good deal nearer the truth in his suppressed essay, when he said that the sexual appetites of women compelled married men in their later years to be cuckolds. Mencken, in his analysis of the feminine mind, ridicules this traditional coldness of women. It is a myth foisted upon woman by man; until recently outwardly approved by woman herself in deference to morality, religious teachings and docility. Even where, through rigid discipline and parental authority, a negative attitude towards the awakened sex cravings of adolescence was induced, there were sure to be, unless the girl could be shut up in a glass case, sporadic outbursts of sexual passion. Close contact with the other sex might well be enough in itself. Whenever the Brontë girls encountered, at home or in the street, a man of prepossessing appearance they had to avert their eyes to subdue naughty thoughts and desires.

Arising out of woman's reputed *anæsthesia sexualis* is the myth that the differences in various females, so far as pudicity is concerned, are negligible. It is surprising that so practised a philanderer as Benjamin Franklin, the refer-

SEX IGNORANCE

ences to whose lubricities have been carefully expunged from most accounts of his life available to posterity, in his notorious suppressed letter should have stated that if the face, neck and breasts are covered "it is impossible of two women to know an old one from a young one; and, as in the dark all cats are grey, the pleasure of corporal enjoyment with an old woman is at least equal." To the same effect was Heine's famous assertion: "Turn out the lights and all women are alike," which has become axiomatic. One can well understand the cuckooing of this cynicism by every smart-alecky-man-about-town desirous of impressing adolescents; one marvels at the broadcasting of so moss-grown a platitude by the truly sophisticated. Pierre Louÿs would have roared at the idea; so would Remy de Gourmont; so would Balzac, so would Casanova.

III

With the declining chasteness of girls and the surprising tendency to look lightly on the loss of virginity, and even more easily on the committing of adultery, it is not unnatural that woman

MARRY OR BURN

is beginning to have less reticence as to her sexual desires.

True, this only applies to girls of the younger set—there still lives the old reticence amongst all over thirty. But changes develop rapidly in these days. Already where there was one George Sand a century ago there are a thousand to-day.

As a result of these changes, man, to his horror, is finding that what was sauce for the gander is becoming sauce for the goose. He has so long been accustomed to ignoring any rights of the woman in the matter of sexual intercourse, of looking upon coitus as something to be indulged in according to his own personal whims and desires, that the insistence of the modern young wife that she has rights as well as duties comes as a thundering and dismaying surprise. All this emancipation of woman, this frittering with sex before marriage, these dabblings into Freud and Adler and Krafft-Ebing and Havelock Ellis, have resulted in the demand that the husband must satisfy her sex needs. Sexual appetite once thoroughly aroused must be satiated or aborted. And seeing that woman's potential capacity for

SEX IGNORANCE

coitus is very nearly unlimited, many men, with marriage, discover to their consternation that they are quite unable to satisfy the demands of their wives. The inquiry of Hamilton and Macgowan revealed the fact that one-third of the men were unable to have intercourse as often as their wives desired it.

Analogously, there are men to whom fornication is the biggest and most important thing in life; modern Henry the Eighths whose sexual appetites are insatiable. They marry with the idea that their wives are sent by God and by law for the sole purpose of satisfying their carnal appetites. In such cases what occurs on the wedding night is nothing but a licensed rape; the man seizes his wife as a cock does a hen; he repeats his passionate acts regardless of her wishes or fears, knowing full well he is within the law. Little wonder that revulsion is bred in the woman's mind.

Between the satyriasis of so many husbands and the nymphomania of so many wives, happiness departs from the marriage union in a big proportion of cases before the honeymoon has served its turn.

MARRY OR BURN

IV

The sex act in both male and female is acquired. All the references in sex books, medical works, scientific treatises, novels and the popular press, to the sex instinct are so much twaddle.¹ They arise through the confounding of instinct with habit, through the confusing of what is acquired with what is hereditary. It is a fact known to sexologists that the number of men who on their wedding night find themselves with the vaguest ideas as to how to perform properly the sexual act is no small one. There are men who for years have used the urethra instead of the vagina. There was an instance recorded by Howe of one bungler who had to search for the point of entry with the aid of a candle. There are others every whit as ludicrous.

Despite the increased sex knowledge of the new generation, despite the distillation from the works of the psycho-analysts and the popular sex books, there exists a stupendous amount of ignorance. For the sex emancipation of to-day is resulting not so much in knowledge of technique as of the earlier awakening and development of eroticism.

¹ See my work, *Sex and Its Mysteries*, pp. 69 *et seq.*

SEX IGNORANCE

This ignorance is responsible for the unhappiness, if not the actual breaking up, of a tremendous number of marriages.

For woman the sexual side of marriage is often one of grave difficulty: on this one factor are far more marriages wrecked than on any other. In the prodigious main, the woman either expects what she doesn't get or she gets what she doesn't expect. Either way she is in for a staggering surprise, and finds much of the romance she had pictured shot to shreds. A little understanding and a little tolerance on both sides would do much to ameliorate the position. The man, whatever the state of his pent-up passions, should control himself: he cannot expect to retain the respect of a girl whom, the moment the law has given him the right, he has attacked as a bull does a cow. Too often the wedding night is an occasion for a scene reminiscent of the description of Veronica's initiation in *The Cantab*; too often the honeymoon, so far as the husband is concerned, is a private sex orgy of heteroclitic indecencies.

Few men seem to be aware that the rupturing of the hymen is rarely accomplished without pain, that the resulting heavy hemorrhage may in turn

MARRY OR BURN

induce peritonitis. Fewer still know that repeated acts of coitus before the lacerated parts have had time to heal, are attended with acute discomfort, if not with pain. Still fewer men apparently are aware that passionate haste may mean the arousing rather than the satisfying of their partner's amour; that this persistent ignoring of anything but their own pleasure is not only the acme of selfishness but sows the seeds of the marital unhappiness which inevitably leads to adultery on the part of the wife. The art of love, in its purely sexual side, lies in understanding that both partners have rights which must be respected: that the sexual satisfaction of the female is as important as is the sexual satisfaction of the male. Courtship should precede every sexual act, says Havelock Ellis, sanely. If it doesn't, then not unnaturally it is apt to arouse in any æsthetic woman something little removed from disgust.

I am not going so far as to assert that a copy of the *Kama Sutra* should form part of the equipment of every newly-married couple; I am not going to repeat the advice that Van Swieten gave to the Empress Maria Theresa, but I certainly think there are few men about to enter matrimony who

SEX IGNORANCE

would not profit by a little extra knowledge concerning the technique of the sexual act. It is through lack of this knowledge that, with few exceptions, men either disgust their wives with an excess of amour, or accord to them a degree of respect and delicacy that fails dismally to give complete sexual satisfaction.

Woman is much slower in reaching the orgasm than is man, a fact of which most men are either unaware or willfully and selfishly disregard. This slower rising sexual tempo is followed by a similarly slowly descending passion, which again is ignored by the average male. The result is that the man, arising out of what to the woman can have no other appearance than of excessive haste, gives the impression that his own satisfaction is the sole thing that concerns him. All of which may mean little in the case of a woman with the æsthetic feelings of a cow, but to a more cultivated female matters immensely.

The popular notion that man is invariably guilty of sexual excess and that woman is the unwilling martyr is by no means correct. I have come across more than one instance where the male was totally incapable of satisfying his wife's appetite;

MARRY OR BURN

there are women who at fifty and more call for nightly attentions. There is always a limit to the male's capacity; there is never any limit to that of the female. And precisely here lies the tragedy of marriage to a nymphomaniac, or to a woman who, with the coming of the menopause, develops the appetite of an Aspasia at a time when her husband approaches senility.

Because of these immense variations in appetite and capacity it is unwise for anyone to attempt to prescribe any precise number of sexual acts that should take place per week or per month. True, Moses, with his usual love for meddling, made a law; so did Mohammed; even Luther stuck his fingers into the pie. The lot of them, too, on pain of excommunication, expressly forbid any attempts at intercourse during the catamenial flow. The noteworthy thing about all these laws and regulations is that the woman is never so much as considered: Socrates, Moses, Solon, Mohammed, *et al.*, all based their laws, or made their recommendations, on the basis that what counted in the matter was the man alone. In advising restraint these holy monsters of selfishness were concerned with the preservation of the man's health; that of

SEX IGNORANCE

the woman was unworthy of consideration. She was a slave, and for a number of days in each month a filthy slave at that.

With all the advance in civilization, in humanitarianism, with all the effeminacy of the age, I have a suspicion that most men, and in particular those of the more plebeian class, retain in their own individual outlook a good deal of this ancient attitude towards women; a number, I strongly suspect, unconsciously carry out to the letter Mohammed's beastly advice. It rarely occurs to them to consult their partners in the matter, a fact which has something to do with the yearly pregnancies of a good many women who are seldom given adequate opportunities for elaborate preventive measures. The tale of the collier who, invariably, in the manner of an Eskimo, attacked his wife as she was doubled over the wash-tub is, I fancy, no isolated instance.

There are admittedly circumstances where variations of the normal sex act are advisable, and which, were they adopted, would avoid certain risks. For instance, much of the pain attendant normally on defloration could be avoided by the adoption of a certain variation of normal copula-

MARRY OR BURN

tion. Unfortunately any detailed description in the pages of this work is impossible without risking its suppression as an obscene book. Many savage races, unobsessed with the need for proving virginity, avoid much discomfort for the bride on the wedding night by previously destroying the hymen and widening the vaginal opening by means of digital dilatation.

Injuries to the woman through the coital act are common. The fact that one rarely hears of such injuries is no evidence of their non-existence: the delicacy of the matter and the reluctance on the part of the woman to mention any such injury constitute sufficient explanation of the meager number which come to light. There are, however, innumerable cases for the finding in medical literature. Usually they result from brutality, ignorance of how properly to perform coitus, drunkenness, disproportion of the sexual organs, abnormal position during the act, and pathological conditions of the vagina or vulva. Occasionally injuries may result through ignorance or brutality during the final period of pregnancy, and through the resumption of relations too soon after parturition: six weeks at least

SEX IGNORANCE

should elapse before intercourse is resumed. Where intercourse is desired during pregnancy, the lateral position is advisable; while in cases of corpulency in either partner, and where certain pelvic or abdominal pathological conditions are present in the female, coitus *a part posteriori* is to be recommended. Indeed it is so recommended in the *Talmud*. Even Pope Benedict XVI, in his zeal for peopling the earth, gave it his blessing.

The bride, too, would be all the better for instruction in the technique of the sexual act. It is here that the prostitute has the respectable girl beaten—she has at her finger-tips all the tricks of the professional love-maker. The women of Abyssinia, who teach their daughters the *duk-duk* movement in coitus, are more practical than the English women, who send their girls to the marriage-bed with such puerile notions respecting the sex act as that it takes a whole night to perform, or that it is conducted by merely lying side by side, or that intercourse takes place at the navel or in the urethra, and the like fallacious inanities.

CHAPTER SIX

SEXUAL EXCESSES AND ABNORMALITIES

IN page after page of this work I have denounced Christianity for its attitude towards sex. But the counts of the indictment have not all been enumerated. Christianity has played into the hands of the sex maniac, the pervert, the man to whom fornication is the supreme thing in life. It has given to men of these types a license for their abnormal lusts. It has enabled them to secure victims who were helpless against this remorseless tyranny; helpless because in law they had no redress: the man was merely doing what the marriage contract gave him the right to do.

Not content with making of marriage an almost irrevocable contract, by putting in the way of its breaking every conceivable obstacle, the Church has done all it possibly could to force the lecherous, the prurient, the satyriatic into marriage. It has railed against the sin of fornication, against prostitution, against self-abuse: in other

SEXUAL EXCESSES AND ABNORMALITIES

words, it has made it impossible for the man who wishes to maintain the pose of respectability to satisfy his sexual desires outside marriage. It is idle to deny the truth of this. It is an incontrovertible fact that, amongst the most respected residents of every town and village in England, there are married men by the score whose sexual appetites are so strong that it would have been quite impossible to maintain that respectability outside the married state. In addition, there are men devoid of any such scruples who marry because, through financial limitations, there is no other way in which they can thoroughly satiate their abnormal appetites.

Parents are monumentally selfish where the welfare of their children is concerned. They will sacrifice anyone else without the slightest compunction. To a rake's parents the condemnation to lifelong misery of the girl their son marries matters not the smallest jot if there is the faintest shadow of the scapegrace becoming in the process a reformed character. Greedy to grasp the slenderest straw, parents of drunken, idle, dissolute young men make ceaseless efforts to marry them to nice, quiet, respectable girls. The "burning"

MARRY OR BURN

youths nearly always, for one reason or another, resort to the cure which St. Paul advocates. Masturbators are pushed by despairing mothers into alliances which can only have tragic consequences. Any consideration for the girl victim is buried deeply and durably—the fact that it would be far better that the youth should masturbate to his heart's content than he should inflict upon some unsophisticated girl lifelong agony, is selfishly ignored.

Not always, however, is the fault on the side of the man. There are nymphomaniacs amongst women as there are satyriasisists amongst men. Unpalatable though the statement may be, it is much better that a nymphomaniac should go to the streets to earn her living than that she should marry. Nymphomania in woman is ten times worse than satyriasis in man. Whatever may be the man's appetite there comes a time when it is sated. But not so in the woman's case. Her capacity is terrific: she can wear out a dozen men and yet retain the freshness of a lily. It is God help the man who marries a nymphomaniac. Mrs. Julia in Sudermann's *Das Hohe Lied*, and Mme.

SEXUAL EXCESSES AND ABNORMALITIES

Chantelouve in Huysmans' *La Bas*, are not impossible characterizations.

II

Even where the woman's erotic feeling is normal she may be dissatisfied. The man may be impotent. And his impotence may be temporary or it may be permanent. Periods of temporary impotence are liable to occur to every man, usually following sexual excesses, or physical and mental fatigue. Permanent impotence is the result of pathological conditions and of senescence. In cases where the woman is not markedly erotic, where she is in dread fear of pregnancy, where the man has led her a pretty dance through his repeated attentions, she will probably view his condition with delight. But where the woman has definite sexual wants of her own she is inclined to view her spouse's condition with dismay and possibly disgust. He arouses expectations which he cannot fulfill, and leaves his partner unsatisfied, disturbed and discontented. And impotency in man is common, far more common than is even

MARRY OR BURN

suspected. For it is not a thing that any man is going to shout from the housetops. Its results are tragic. It causes men, in utter dismay, to consult frenziedly the advertising pages of health magazines, to sample in turn all the aphrodisiacs available. It leads more than any other single factor to adultery in women.

III

So many marriages smash to bits, or dawdle along in conditions of utter misery, through sexual incompatability, that there seems to be a case for the recognition and adoption of Judge Lindsey's scheme. The Church, in its attempts to bolster up a concept of marriage by which two individuals, so biologically and morphologically different as to be incapable of living together happily, are compelled to continue existing in misery until one partner dies, proves itself unutterably stupid and silly. One can excuse the ignorance of those who sat in solemn conclave on the Council of Trent and settled the details of the marriage contract—they knew nothing of colloidal processes, of the real nature of perversions;

SEXUAL EXCESSES AND ABNORMALITIES

they were not even acquainted with the mechanism of the reproductive act. But to-day the tale is a different one. Dean Inge and other decorative heads of the Church are mildly flirting with eugenics and birth control; even the lesser divines are reduced to perspiring and unconvincing efforts to run with the hare of theological dogma and the hounds of modern sexual emancipation. The results are ludicrous. The parsons are making the religion they preach an object of contempt and derision. Their attempts to hold on to their bread and butter by the adoption of a system of compromise result in their staging a theologic clown-show. Not that I blame them for this. They have their livings to earn, and it is decidedly improbable that they could earn them in any other way. But, I submit, it would be infinitely better to admit that the marriage laws are based, not on anything to be found in the Holy Writ, but on the pious adumbrations of a band of sixteenth-century ecclesiastics bent on extending their own influence.

The net result is that every year there continue to be joined in the most entangling of alliances thousands of couples whose sexual desires and

MARRY OR BURN

appetites are profoundly different. Inevitably there follow trouble, misery, often brutality, occasionally something worse. The carefully nurtured girl may discover, within twenty-four hours of the long-looked-for tying of the nuptial knot, that the man she has sworn to love and to honor, if not to obey, has habits which fill her with disgust; that did not the law prevent it, she would flee from her husband as a man does from a poxy woman. The youth who follows literally St. Paul's advice discovers, to his consternation, that the charming girl who has been filling him with strange longings is an iceberg; that his problem is no nearer solution, and that he has, in addition, an expensive woman to dress and feed.

IV

I have never yet been able to see any sense in the Christian attitude towards the homosexual. By sheer persecution it encourages the alliance in marriage of such an individual with a heterosexual; a tragic affair, particularly for the normal partner. In effect this attitude results in the creation and toleration of a crime, in so far as it

SEXUAL EXCESSES AND ABNORMALITIES

condemns to lifelong suffering an innocent person. Weininger, on the one hand, with his advocacy of marriage between the masculine woman and the feminine man; and Ludovici, on the other hand, with his suggestion that the masculine woman be tied to a man of ultra-masculinity, both betray puerile reasoning; both surrender to the charm of nugacity. The Greeks were sounder. Once the thing is looked at sanely most of the fatigal difficulties vanish. Whether one views the matter with pity, with tolerance, or with disgust, it is infinitely better that homosexuals should marry amongst themselves than that they should pester normal individuals with their perversions. Even the eugenists should cheer this idea, for if there is anything at all in their hypothesis, this would be the best method of eliminating homosexuality—the victims of perversion would be prevented from littering the earth with their kind without recourse to clumsy gubernatorial schemes of sterilization. For, contrary to popular ideas, homosexuals rarely carry trade marks of their peculiar sexual make-up in prominent view. The leers and winks of the smart alecks when deep female voices are mentioned,

MARRY OR BURN

the guffaws at the big-breasted and corseted men, are based on fables circulated by consumers of trashy erotic novels and sexual tracts of dubious authenticity.

Where there is any considerable disparity between the ages of wife and husband happiness is biologically impossible. If the girl is not cuckolding her doting husband, she is assiduously working out foolproof schemes for poisoning his coffee. While I could never, owing to my belief in the freedom of the individual, work up any enthusiasm for a scheme with for its object the prohibition of marriage between girls of eighteen and dotards of ninety, it is none the less a crime that the girl, just because she has been badgered into the thing by her parents; or has been temporarily blinded by the jewels which a nice, kind, old gentleman has stuck on her body; should have to share his table and his bed until the worms get him, even though he turns out to have dirty and disgusting habits, or endeavors to persuade her to partake in nauseating sexual practices.

SEXUAL EXCESSES AND ABNORMALITIES

Equally is it a crime that a man, even in his senility, should be compelled to walk about the house in fear and trembling, eat his meals without enjoyment, and have life generally made a horror because he suspects that the hussy he has taken for wife is tinkering with his food or greasing the bedroom steps.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE DESIRE FOR CHANGE

LOVE, as I have already attempted to demonstrate, is the most hysterical of all the emotions. Marriage is a custom of society, instituted for social and economic reasons, and based on the supposition that this emotional and peripatetic concept of love is everlasting. Its rules and regulations imply that the love of to-day will be the love of ten years hence; that a man will experience the same reaction when viewing his waddling, thick-ankled, doughy-chinned, dilapidated wife in her forty-fifth year as he did when gazing in entranced admiration at the slim blonde beauty of nineteen he led to the altar; that the woman who has preserved her looks and shape until her thirty-fifth year will see precisely the same charm in the wheezing, big-bellied, red-nosed, short-tempered, shattered, trundling moron she calls husband, as in the

THE DESIRE FOR CHANGE

graceful Adonis she cuddled in the park. Everyone knows well enough that for the one case where this emotion in all its pristine force continues to exist, there are nine other cases where it doesn't. And for all these hundreds of years Christianity has acted on the assumption that the exact reverse of this ratio is the true one.

Again, this Christian concept was formed at a time when, so far as are concerned the huge bulk of the people, for the male, pleasures outside fornication were few; for the woman, none at all. Marriage provided the best, the safest, the cheapest mode of obtaining that pleasure. Therefore it was hailed with joy; therefore, too, were its disadvantages glossed over and suffered with composure. The remarkable advance in civilization, and the enormous improvement in the standard of living, have changed all this. In ever-increasing numbers men are finding they can obtain their sexual pleasures at less cost and trouble outside the married state than in it.

The nearer conditions approach the primitive the less likely are marriages to be dissolved. Desire sufficiently strong to induce the search for a fresh partner is little likely to be inflamed in a

MARRY OR BURN

man, or in a woman either for the matter of that, in a community where all the inhabitants conform pretty nearly to one pattern; in other words, amongst peasants, proletarians, et cetera. Imagine any man married to a policewoman or to a Salvation Army girl wanting to forsake her for another female in a community where there were nothing but policewomen and Salvation Army girls. But let an actress or a typist or a mannequin come upon the scene and every available male would be competing for her smiles. Man, in his loves, is, after all, closely analogous to the male domestic fowl. A Rhode Island Red cockerel is content enough with his half-dozen Rhode Island Red females, and pays attention to them all in turn and with little discrimination. But let a Plymouth Rock hen stray upon his domain and he will promptly forsake every one of his own wives to pay individual and exclusive attention to the new charmer.

It is this basic fact of the desire for change increasing in direct proportion to the differentiation in men and women, where lies the real reason for the comparatively low rate of divorce in Soviet Russia, where divorce is easier than it is in

THE DESIRE FOR CHANGE

any other country in the world, compared with the rates in other States, where obstacles of every conceivable brand are deliberately put in the way of marriage dissolution. No one seems to have tumbled upon this true reason.

“Although divorce has now been made open for all, and its pursuit unaccompanied by difficulty of explanation or expenditure, the rate of divorce in Soviet Russia has not been spectacular. The only time when divorces raced beyond normal predictions was at the very beginning of the new code. When the code was first put into effect, it gave an opportunity to thousands who had been oppressed under the marital regulations of the Tzarist regime to take advantage of the new freedom of divorce. Since then the rate has not experienced such exaggerated ratios. In 1922, for instance, there were ten divorces for each ten thousand inhabitants; in 1923 there were eleven; and in 1924 and 1925 approximately the same rate persisted. Fifty-three per cent. of the divorcees, it should be remarked, had been married for one year, and 13 per cent. for periods of longer duration. When we recall from our previous studies in divorce ratios that the *average in the United States is 15.3 divorces for every ten thousand inhabitants*, the statistics in Soviet Russia might appear comforting even to the conservative. With freedom of divorce the ratio of divorces is less than with the lack of freedom—

MARRY OR BURN

such an argument might be projected by a moralist from these statistics.”¹ (*The author's italics.*)

So Mr. V. F. Calverton. Mr. Calverton, when he turns enthusiastic and uncritical eyes upon anything to be found in Soviet Russia, reminds one of God's reflections as given in Genesis after an examination of each day's creative efforts. True, Mr. Calverton does recognize that there are "certain factors in the Russian situation that are bound to hold the divorce rate at a surprisingly low level." He recognizes that the number of separations where there have been no registered marriages and of which therefore no records appear, and the fact that many peasants are unaware of the divorce facilities available, disturb to some extent any inferences one may attempt to draw from the official figures. But he overlooks, I submit, the one reason that towers majestically over every other. He overlooks entirely—and so apparently does everyone else—the outstanding fact that the inhabitants of Russia, being for the most part ignorant bumpkins, have little incentive to divorce compared with the

¹ V. F. Calverton, *The Bankruptcy of Marriage*, pp. 248-9.

THE DESIRE FOR CHANGE

inhabitants of more prosperous States. It pays neither the man or the woman to seek a fresh partner. Nor are the bulk of these morons likely to come in contact with individuals of greater charm than the ones to whom they are already hitched.

II

As every step forward in civilization is accompanied with risks to the irrevocability of marriage, so it becomes necessary for both women and men to perfect a technique for retaining as long as is possible their initial attractions in their partner's eyes. Love is created and developed when the man and woman are looking their best, and also when each is in a condition to overlook the defects of the other. It can only continue by the preservation of that first impression, and, if humanly possible, the hiding of all existent defects. Strictly speaking, this is more important in the woman than in the man. Woman is more realistic and in all probability sees through a good deal of the fake in its nascency. But this does not apply to the male. At fifty he is as easily fooled by a carefully repaired and painted face as he was at

MARRY OR BURN

twenty. The married woman is apt to forget this: she is prone to give less attention, so far as her husband is concerned, to her appearance. She often makes the initial error of appearing before him as a slattern. She should, on the contrary, prance about in pretty clothes, take advantage of all the arts of the faker in the way of rouge, lipstick, perfume and powder; in short, she should work overtime in making herself attractive. It is part of her job.

This art of making oneself attractive to one's partner has, in recent years, taken upon itself vast additional importance. The modern woman, and in a more restricted degree, the modern man, are becoming less and less inclined to accept the condition of boredom that was at one time looked upon as an inevitable concomitant of wedlock. The "bright young things" of 1930 do not intend to allow marriage to put an end to the "good time" to which they have become accustomed: an outlook brimming with danger. There are so many perils that are inseparable from the proximity of marriage. Foremost are the little personal habits which are distasteful to the other partner. In the days of courtship these obnoxious

THE DESIRE FOR CHANGE

habits were either carefully hidden, even at the cost of much personal inconvenience and trouble; or were overlooked in consequence of the proverbial blindness with which those in love are afflicted.

Seeing that man selects his partner for life with much less care than he selects a residence, or a horse, or even a dog, it is not surprising that he meets with big and painful surprises when, in a moment of insouciance, the mask slips. One can well imagine the shock following the discovery on the dressing-table of the glorious hair he fell in love with; his dismay when he finds that the peach-like complexion comes out of jars and bottles; the searing revulsion induced by the fact that his Venus has sweaty feet. She, on her part, discovers that her Apollo is ruptured, takes liquid paraffin daily, is addicted to violent belching, spends hours every evening soaking and scraping his corns. They have probably made gross errors as to the nature and extent of each other's accomplishments, which is only to be expected, seeing that in the days of courting each was making every effort to cheat the other. The man has boasted of his prowess at a time when his girl was

MARRY OR BURN

in no condition to see things truly: she, too, adopted precisely similar tactics. I knew a man who, although he had no knowledge of harmony, was passionately fond of what it pleased him to call music. He married a girl who had delighted him with her playing of "Annie Laurie." She was fat, she was flabby, she had a reticulated face, she waddled as she walked; but in his eyes she was a musician and it was enough. The man boasted of his wife's prowess as a pianist, only to discover to his disgust that "Annie Laurie" represented the extent of her musical repertoire—slowly and painfully she had practiced the thing until she could play it through: of music itself she had no more knowledge than has a cow. No man ever thoroughly knows his wife until he marries her, and although this, as I have shown in another place, is one of the charms of marriage, it has its disadvantageous and its perilous side.

Queerly enough, although the disillusionment that comes to each partner after marriage breeds discontent with the union and irritation with the other partner, it rarely, if ever, prevents a repetition of the disease. The husband who has discovered that the beautiful tint of his wife's hair

THE DESIRE FOR CHANGE

comes out of a bottle, that without her artificial teeth she looks a fright, is still an easy mark for a peroxidized blonde; is liable to run away with a flour-faced typist; is the certain victim of a rouge-bedaubed actress. Similarly the woman who is disgusted with her snoring husband, who has objections to his public tooth-picking habits, is liable to become the lover of some dancing instructor with incipient baldness; or a stockbroker afflicted with an offensive rhinitis; or a Bradford cloth merchant who spits on the drawing-room floor.

III

I have heard proposals by the score for preventing the coming of this inevitable disillusion. In the main, these proposals are concerned with the man and wife sleeping in separate bedrooms, going their respective ways during the day, having their own friends, taking their holidays at different places or at different times; in short, acting precisely as if they were single. It is put forward, this gaudy scheme, by the modernists. They claim that the original novelty and charm of marriage can thus be preserved indefi-

MARRY OR BURN

nitely. With all respect, the veriest bosh. The happiness of marriage depends on the continuance of love. Let the man who thinks of such a scheme with approval cast his mind back to his courting days and ask himself whether he would have been content to see his inamorata philandering with another fellow; let the wife ask herself if she could have observed with calm her lover going by himself for a holiday to the precise spot where her most seductive girl rival was known to be sporting her charms? No, the scheme is doomed to failure because love is already in-existent before any such idea can be put into operation. In its ultimate analysis it proposes that a man should treat his wife as a prostitute to be visited on occasion and as the urge arises. It is a scheme propounded by those who have never either loved or been in love; to wit, by libertines, sensual decadents, dilapidated *demi-monde*, and messy old maids.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SOCIAL INTERCOURSE

INEVITABLY it follows that the marriage union is endangered in direct proportion to the temptations to which its partners are subjected. There was wisdom in the practice amongst many Eastern nations of keeping their women securely under lock and key. The ideal existence for a married couple who wish their affections to live until the Day of Judgment would seem to be on an island such as the one on which Robinson Crusoe lived with Man Friday.

Every time a man bangs the door and rages down the street in temporary disgust with his wife he is in distinct danger of falling a prey to the first painted hussy who cares to make eyes at him. Every time a wife flings out of the house in a tantrum and goes to the movies alone, she is easy fish for some philandering Beau Brummel seeking a fresh woman. At such moments, both

MARRY OR BURN

man and woman are in the position of having their defenses seriously weakened. Each partner's position is analogous to that of someone who, while recovering from a severe cold, visits a person afflicted with influenza. These dangers, as is apparent, are many. In numerous instances they occur diurnally.

There was a time when, for the bulk of the population, and particularly for married women, the danger was slight. Not that the quarrels, the disgusts, were infrequent, but the chances of meeting with temptation were enormously reduced. Women, even of the prosperous classes, were exposed to few temptations. Their risks were reduced to those associated with the visits of the local clergy and of the family doctor. Women were too busy attending to their household duties to have much time for gallivanting about on any except such occasions as their husbands were available as escorts. Meals had to be cooked and not emptied out of cans; the children monopolized their mother's time. For the average married man any philanderings were confined to adventures with prostitutes: an expensive and risky entertainment reserved for rare excursions

SOCIAL INTERCOURSE

into regions far removed from his own neighborhood. Thus amorous adventure was the prerogative of the wealthy, of actresses and of professional joy-girls.

All of which is now changed. The immense development of the machine age, the increased standard of living, the emancipation of women, the diffusion of contraceptive information, have together sufficed to revolutionize matters. The modern young wife, in her two-by-four bungalow equipped with labor-saving devices, without children, finds herself with little to do. Long before noon she is restless and wondering how on earth she is to pass the time. Even if she has children they make precious little difference. The State educates them, looks after their health, provides them with play-grounds, and, on occasion, feeds them.

Coincidentally with all this is the great increase in the attractiveness of woman herself. The standardization of dress, the enormous range of gaudy and low-priced clothes, the educative influence of the movies and the popular press, have had their effects. The result is that smartly-dressed women, beautiful and attractive girls, are

MARRY OR BURN

to be found in numbers everywhere. The shop girl and the factory worker have mastered the art of make-up. They can daub their faces as expertly as a Piccadilly joy-girl. In fact no man to-day can with safety accost a red-lipped, meretriciously appparelled beauty without running the risk of a snub: his only safety lies in letting the girl make the first move.

Truth to tell, she is not backward in this. The adoption of the prostitute's apparel and make-up has been accompanied with the adoption also of her easy manners and facile complaisance. The cocktail-drinking, cigarette-smoking young lady of 1930 waits for little in the way of introduction. She has a habit of making acquaintances in movies, in cafés and in dance-halls that is only fractionally different from picking-up in the street. In short, woman, single or married, never had better or more opportunities for philandering; man never found it more easy to make acquaintance with women of respectability.

A pretty wife may easily become a man's worst curse. His pride in dressing her up like a circus horse, and taking her out for other men to admire and other women to envy, is not joy unalloyed.

SOCIAL INTERCOURSE

He has not so much as a moment's peace of mind until he has her safely behind his door again. He cannot leave home for a day without experiencing the fear that the vicar or one of his curates will be camping in his drawing-room.

Granted sufficient in the way of temptation, few women can resist it. Those women so well placed as to be above gold-digging are usually flattery collectors. The practiced philanderer knows this: he showers money and presents on the one, saccharine terminology on the other.

II

The emancipated woman, with her fine ideas of freedom, hammers at the fundament of the married state. To change the metaphor, she elects to play with the fire that will ultimately consume the whole structure. She claims the right to pursue the same course after marriage as she did before, the right to philander with men, bringing forward in support of her claim the old platitudinous argument that where there is love there must be trust. Love has nothing to do with trust. No man who loves a woman, unless he is a fool,

MARRY OR BURN

will trust her with another man. Not necessarily because he does not trust his wife or lover, but because, in any case, he does not trust the man. What happened when Lord Blessington trusted the charming Marguerite with Count d'Orsay has been repeated ten million times since.

The tendency to-day is for woman to enjoy a sexual freedom on a par with what has always been customary in the case of man. Even if this equality does not exist before marriage, it is pretty certain to appear after six months of married life. The fact that man continues to base his attitude towards women, or at any rate, such as he thinks are respectable women, on the assumption that they know nothing of the mysteries of sex, does not affect the matter. It merely adds to the proofs of man's blindness where the female sex is concerned. In addition, it constitutes another count in the indictment that woman can justifiably make against man in respect to his treatment of her as a child where sex is concerned. That in privacy she has the laugh on him does not remove the implied vilipendency. He still reserves his spicy sex stories for the men's smoke-room, innocent of the fact that in strictly female

SOCIAL INTERCOURSE

company the emancipated woman can and does talk filth as glibly as any commercial traveler; that there are ladies of gentle birth who regularly visit the Zoo to watch the monkeys masturbate.

Indeed woman's concern with sex is to-day far greater than is man's. For her it has all the lure of novelty. For generations sex, for the respectable woman, has been taboo, something at best to whisper over in the company of a dear and close friend, and even then only after much preliminary verbal skirmishing; to-day it is a subject to discuss daringly over the tea-cups, a subject that has all the glamour and titillation of the new and the wicked. Anyone who stands aloof is dubbed a prude or a yokel and becomes a butt for ridicule, much as twenty years ago was the boy who failed to laugh at a smutty story.

True, man is grossly unaware of this female sexual manumission. And being unaware of the emancipation itself, he is inclined, as never before, to minimize lamentably its results. Thus he puts no obstacles in the way of her daily galivantings, accepting them as the customary amusements of women nowadays. Custom blinds him to-day as it always has done. He entirely

MARRY OR BURN

overlooks the danger of allowing a stranger of prepossessing appearance to cuddle his wife publicly to the strains of erotic music simply because custom has given to this cuddling the license of respectability. For precisely similar reasons he allows her to drape her body alluringly and parade it obscenely before half-naked men on the bathing beach.

PART 3
THE FUTURE OF MARRIAGE

CHAPTER NINE

CHRISTIANITY'S MARRIAGE MUDDLE

FROM the analysis of marriage in the preceding chapters, it will be sufficiently evident that the present position is a hopelessly muddled one. Christianity, although loath to admit it, has failed dismally. It has done more than fail; it has itself been largely responsible for the brewing of the muddle. For plainly it has asked the impossible. It has a penchant for wanting things both ways: it peddles its wares lustily and truculently in the market-place and favors with a look of pious indignation anyone who suggests that it is getting anything in return. It takes up a heavy stick and belabors polygamy vigorously while it makes rules and regulations which distinctly encourage it. It rails at birth control and abortion, while it refuses to recognize the child born out of wedlock. But although, with dogged obstinacy, the Church continues, in some cases

MARRY OR BURN

dogmatically, in others just a little shamefacedly, to defend its principles, it realizes, I think, that it is fighting a losing battle. It retreats slowly, stubbornly and diplomatically, but none the less it does retreat. And in the process it gives the fraction of a concession here, another fraction there. It chants its nonsense hebdomadally to diminishing numbers of worshippers, but the chant is losing a little of its flavor of infallibility: a note of uneasiness is detectable in the chanter's voice, as though he has a suspicion that the members of his congregation are winking at each other or thumbing their noses behind his back.

Religious customs survive long after their origins are out of tune with current civilization. The Maypole is to-day unconnected with its original phallic significance; the wearing of headgear by women in church continues, though its inception as a means of preventing conception through the ears is no longer given credence. Christmas has degenerated into a bacchanalian feast, with Santa Claus as a better known figure than Jesus Christ; Easter has become a mere pretense for holiday-making.

Similarly, marriage is still regulated by laws

CHRISTIANITY'S MARRIAGE MUDDLE

based upon the Christian concept of the sexual act as being unclean and sinful, and the later concept of its sole justification being the procreation of children. The marvel of it all is that ecclesiastical law should still manage to retain so strong a hold on the marriage contract; that it should still be able to condemn to lives of misery hundreds of thousands of people to whom Christianity itself is no more than a name.

True, this hold is visibly weakening. In ever-increasing numbers couples are dispensing with the priest's blessing. Reformers are talking of the end of monogamy; marriage itself has never been a greater and more universal subject for ridicule and cynicism. In my opinion, all this talk is largely nonsense. I believe there are powerful and obvious reasons why monogamy will continue; not the rigid, ascetic, indissoluble monogamy of Christianity, but a more elastic, more amplified, more human monogamy. The decline of religious persecution, the emancipation of woman and the dissemination of birth control knowledge, individually and together have smashed to smithereens the old order of things. They have brought in their train certain modifi-

MARRY OR BURN

cations and alterations of marriage and its implications, which, however unpalatable they may be to many, are none the less advisable. More, they are inevitable.

II

The justification of the atheistic philosophy is not the right to compel Christians or Mohammedans or Buddhists to adopt it. The sins of Christianity lie in the persecution of unbelievers. The sins of moralists lie in their dogmatic asseverations that any departure from their rigidly defined rules constitutes immorality and in consequence ranks as vice or crime.

It is a peculiarity of the animal called man that he revels in tyranny. Despite his indignant protests, his very unaltruism is evidence of this tyranny. Thus the upsetting of the platform of one band of terrorists is immediately followed by the uprearing of another platform crowded with another band of terrorists, equally menacing, equally unjust and equally selfish. The fact that they pose under some fancy name or other does not affect the matter. Democracy expresses the

CHRISTIANITY'S MARRIAGE MUDDLE

most complete mental terrorism the world has known. The ambition of the proletariat's leaders is not to lift up the whole of society: it is to grab the places occupied by the existent heads, and in turn to use the whip on their fellow-men, as is evidenced in the attitude of the leaders of Socialism in England to-day.

Analogously the eugenists wish to impose their dog-breeding theories on mankind: they plan to sterilize those who, in their opinion, are unsuitable breeders or parents, and to force others to litter the earth with their young. James Douglas, Lord Brentford, J. C. Squire, John S. Sumner and *John Bull* aim to select the world's reading matter and to jail those who write, print, or read anything of which they do not approve; the feminists not only want to oust men from their jobs but express annoyance because these men don't cheer their actions. The impudence of all these various reformers is so grotesque and so colossal it causes one, despite its serious side, to let out a roaring horse laugh.

The muddle of 1930 is not, at its fundament, in any way different from the muddle of 1830 or 1730. It results from the persistent refusal to

MARRY OR BURN

face the fact that the morality of one individual is the immorality of another. It bases its code on the assumption that the correct estimate of morality is expressed in terms of its greatest common denominator; an assumption which is sufficient to cause every individual of any intelligence to vomit. Resultant from this is the corollary that what the public doesn't endorse is necessarily silly or sinful, and therefore inadmissible. The rebels, as I have shown, spit the same inanities. They simply wish to reverse matters by forcing on the orthodox their own heterodoxy. Thus the modernists shout for the abolition of marriage; the eugenists for marriage by permit.

Sanity and intelligence call for a different attitude; an attitude based on the realization of the fact that because ten persons find an individual's actions or opinions distasteful is no reason why he should be compelled at the bayonet point to march in their procession, flourishing their banner and singing their tunes.

CHAPTER TEN

WILL MONOGAMY CONTINUE?

THE argument that in modern times there is a tendency for man to become polygamous is fundamentally absurd. Man has always been polygamous. Strictly speaking, monogamy and polygamy have ever been co-existent, in the respect that man's amorous life has been a series of monogamous unions. The monogamy of Christianity differs from the polygamy of Moham-medism only in the matter of terminology. The Moslem openly parades his love episodes under religious license; the Christian camouflages them in accordance with religious taboo. Abraham, Jacob, David, Solomon, Abdon, Joash, Gideon, were all polygamists. Judged by the Levitical laws, most men, by the time they reach thirty, are polygamists. For whether the man shares his favors with many women in the manner of the farmyard rooster; or whether one female is com-

MARRY OR BURN

pletely deserted before another is taken to the marital bed, matters little: polygamy exists in both instances.

The extent of a man's affairs is governed to a very big extent by his purse. Thus polygamy has always been and still is the privilege of the rich: even in Mohammedan countries, where the practice is not so much as frowned upon, many men, through sheer incapacity to afford the pleasure, never have but one wife; others, through the greediness of the rich, are compelled to remain celibate. In the Middle Ages a man's wealth might well be computed by the number of bastards he had caused to be born.

So long as marriage exists monogamy will exist. The number of marriages, in consequence of the increasing reluctance of young men to hamper themselves with wives, the extending polyandry of women, and the fastidiousness of the modern girl, may strikingly decrease, but it will still be a considerable one. And the reasons for this call for no very diligent search.

I know it is customary for young girls to refer sneeringly to marriage, to talk glibly of having a good time, to claim equal rights with men in the

WILL MONOGAMY CONTINUE?

matter of sexual adventure, to assert the privilege of sowing their wild oats, to demand freedom to indulge in pernoctalian flirtations. But in actual truth they mean only a tittle of what they say. By sex equality all they mean is the right to philander with every young man they fancy, to have affairs both before and after marriage analogous to those with which they credit man; that, in every case, the man concerned shall foot the bill. And I have yet to meet the girl who will refuse an offer of marriage from the man with the right income and flourishing passable looks. All this emancipation provides the girl, who for one reason or another remains on the shelf, with excuses which she works to the full, in the faint hope of hoodwinking her more fortunate rivals. For with it all, the married woman looks down on her spinster sister as a member of the army of unwanted women.

Marriage is still woman's best job. Admittedly there are risks attached to it. But they are outweighed, these risks, so enormously by the advantages connected with the married state that it is worth any woman's while to run them. She secures, in the majority of cases, a life of compara-

MARRY OR BURN

tive ease. She is not responsible for her debts;¹ for the slanders she utters; the libels she publishes; for many of the frauds and most of the crimes she commits. Even if her husband deserts her, or obtains a legal separation, she has a claim to a considerable portion of his present and future earnings.² Even if she has money, it pays her to marry. She retains her own money and is entitled to a share of her husband's. She can squander every cent of her own income, and compel her husband to pay the tax on that income. And if he fails to pay this tax, and she refuses, it is the husband who goes to prison.

The tale that the modern girl prefers to work for her living and retain her freedom is largely

¹ There is apparently one country at least where sanity in this matter prevails. According to Turkish law, a man cannot be held responsible for his wife's debts.

² At the North London Police Court on February 14th, 1930, according to *The Yorkshire Post* report, Mrs. Katherine Caroline Lawrence (formerly Mekota) was given judgment for the continuance of a maintenance order made in her favor in 1925, despite the fact that she had since obtained a divorce and re-married. Mr. E. R. Guest (for Mekota) pointed out that: "If a woman lived in adultery the order would unquestionably become void. It seemed ridiculous that a man should be called upon to help to support another man's wife."

WILL MONOGAMY CONTINUE?

bosh. It is a tale given currency by the sex-starved viragoes who swell the ranks of the feminists, the lady politicians, the reformers, the moralists. In short, it is the tale told by every woman who has failed in her efforts to ensnare man. If you are inclined to doubt the truth of this, take a pair of scissors and cut from the illustrated tabloids the pictures of the women who grace the feminist movement; who take part in vice suppression crusades and campaigns for the abolition of white slavery; who prance about as reformers, moralists, *et al.* When your collection has reached the neighborhood of a score, examine these pictures carefully, and I will wager much that in the whole lot there are precious few females whom you would care to kiss, or whom you can imagine doing their courting except in the dark or behind the abditive protection of the thickest veiling! These women have failed in their efforts to attract men, and they are responsible for the stories which represent man as a sexual monster bent on seducing every woman that crosses his path. The exact contrary is the actual truth. It is the woman, in nine cases out of ten, who seduces the man. She pursues him energetically, hectically, perse-

MARRY OR BURN

veringly. It is, with certain notable exceptions, to man's advantage to avoid marriage, just as it is to woman's advantage to marry. The number of marriages occurring every year is proof in all abundance that women, in the vast main, wish to marry.

Not only is it to woman's advantage to marry: it is to her advantage to *remain* married. Comparatively few women seek divorce, and all who do seek it are either wealthy, apart from anything they get from their husbands, or pretty enough to be sure of ensnaring another man. It is not dislike of marriage *per se* that causes divorce, but dislike of the particular person one has married. Most divorced persons re-marry. Nearly all men do: most of the women who retain their looks do. Whoever heard of a poor, ugly or dilapidated woman applying for a divorce?

There are, as I have already indicated, a considerable number of men who require no seduction. They must either marry, have mistresses or consort with prostitutes. True, the increasing tendency of the modern girl to view the loss of her virginity without qualms, and the considerable increase in polyandry amongst married women,

WILL MONOGAMY CONTINUE?

provide increasing opportunities for such men to satisfy their lusts in safety and at small expense. The result is that the number of men entering marriage solely for the satisfaction of sensual appetites is steadily diminishing. But there still remains a considerable number. For there are, as incentives which tempt some, the exclusive right to love which goes with marriage, coupled with the fact that it gives a license to indulge in the sexual act to an extent and in a manner that would probably be resented in any other circumstances.

There are, too, the middle-aged and the old, very nearly all of whom can with confidence be looked upon as candidates for the married state. Few men remain bachelors to the end. Every man of sixty requires either a nurse or a wife.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

FREE LOVE AND COMPANIONATE MARRIAGE

CHRISTIANITY and the State, by their attitude towards sex, encourage free love. Deny this allegation as they may, it is nevertheless a fact. Laws, both civil and ecclesiastical, are imposed by people either of irrefragable respectability or desirous of adopting such a pose; in other words, by idiots, cowards and hypocrites. They are imposed by those who are ashamed of their inclinations; who whenever they are impelled to give way to their tastes do so in dark corners, much as a chapel deacon sneaks into a bordello, or a clergyman examines naughty pictures in the interests of morality, or a vice committee makes spicy investigations of night-club management. Because of this, those responsible for the framing of the prohibitions attach to them a degree of efficacy that is largely fictitious. They credit other people with the same fears of public

FREE LOVE

comment, censure, and scandal that actuate themselves. To some extent, of course, they succeed in enforcing on others their own code of morals. For instance, they cause mayors, aldermen, town councillors, Sunday-school superintendents, Y.M.C.A. officials, bank managers, *et al.*, to stick to their wives to the end, and to confine any outburst of naughtiness to clandestine visits to pleasure centers or to the practice of masturbation behind securely locked doors. But so far as is concerned a very considerable bulk of the public, who are responsible to no meddling superiors for their peccadillos, they fail, and fail most dismally. True, they succeed in many instances in preventing the actual dissolution of marriage, but in the process they drive either husband or wife to indulge in promiscuous extra-marital amours, or bring about separation and consequent free-love alliances.

If the moralists and theologians were not so utterly blind, so phenomenally stupid, and so obsolete-minded, they would realize that the Christian attitude towards marriage is illogical and untenable. It is based upon a concept that completely misunderstands love. It makes the

MARRY OR BURN

grotesquely idiotic assumption that love can be held and perpetuated by law. Admittedly, in the past there might have been some justification for maintaining an attitude at variance with common sense, but to-day that justification has wholly vanished. The Church and the State may as well admit the truth and frame new regulations in accordance with that truth. But they persist in subscribing to the Pauline concept of marriage as an antidote for sin, as a regulator of vice, as a means of providing a sort of registered "Red Light district." "Marriage," says the Prayer Book, "was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication; that such persons as have not the gift of continence might marry, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ's body."¹

No marriage can endure happily which could not endure as a free union. A thousand times better would it be for the man and woman who can only be kept together by law, to be separated. This is at once a condemnation of the theologic

¹ Much has been made, by apologetic and weathercocky clergymen, of the euphemized version of this passage which appears in the *Prayer Book as Proposed in 1928*, but actually all it amounts to is the substitution of drawing-room terminology for plain English.

FREE LOVE

attitude towards marriage and a justification of free love. Indeed for the illegal union there is more than this to be said. In many instances it is likely to prove more durable than is the priest-blessed union. For here there is no license for sexual brutality. There is no throwing of the girl to the husband, as occurs so often in the case of marriage. The man has got to behave himself and he knows it. There are married men who, in the throes of sexual passion, attack their wives as they would never dare attack even a prostitute, and Christianity, to its eternal shame, upholds their actions. The wife, under the ægis of the law, submits with repugnance and disgust to what if attempted with a mistress would earn the man a smack in the face. Nor need the male lover be in dire fear every time he turns his back that his mate will live riotously and run up extravagant bills for him to pay.

Despite the insults and tirades it has brought down upon his head, Judge Ben Lindsey, in what he calls companionate marriage, has devised a scheme which has many points in its favor, and which is certainly sane and practicable. It is simplicity itself. It merely calls for the recognition

MARRY OR BURN

of the fact that, contrary to the Prayer Book marriage service, procreation is not necessarily one of the purposes of marriage. Every sane man living to-day knows that thousands of couples get married every year who do not intend to have children. Even the clergy, their ostrich-like habits notwithstanding, can no longer deny their knowledge of widespread contraceptive practices. This much admitted, many of the present-day laws regulating marriage become obsolete and superfluous. For, granting a couple have no children, why should they be bound by the regulations which were expressly devised for those who have children? Says Judge Ben Lindsey:

“We ought to recognize the childless marriage as a separate thing from the procreative marriage, instead of stupidly treating them as if they were one and the same thing. We ought to recognize that regulations which are perfectly reasonable in the one are absurd and irrational in the other.”¹

This distinction allowed, Judge Lindsey contends that scientific birth control information should be

¹ Judge Ben B. Lindsey and Wainwright Evans, *The Companionate Marriage*.

FREE LOVE

available to all, that so long as the woman is without children and unpregnant, the husband should not be responsible for her support; that divorce should be permitted by mutual consent; that providing the woman is in good health and able to work at the time of divorce, no alimony should be paid by the husband.

It is held by objectors that this is nothing but free love. The which is perfectly true. Judge Lindsey does not contend that there is anything new in this. His point is confined to the fact that it is better in every way to acknowledge these free-love alliances as legal and justifiable unions which only take on the laws and regulations pertaining to present-day marriage when such unions result in the birth of a child.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE UNMARRIED WOMAN'S RIGHT TO LOVE

THE notion, still clung to by all those who profess respectability, that man can have amours before marriage with impunity, while woman must go to the altar a virgin, is a preposterous notion. For its circulation man has been mainly responsible. He based his taboos on grounds which have since been proved to be mythical and on others which recent developments have rendered obsolete.

In the fact that the woman is the child-bearer lies the root of the whole notion that what in man is a mere lapse, forgivable and natural, in woman takes on the semblance of a crime. In some queer way it is contended that the effect on the woman of sexual indulgence before marriage is altogether different from the effect after marriage; that the blessing of God alters the whole physiology and morphology of the sex act. More, it is

UNMARRIED WOMAN'S RIGHT TO LOVE

held by the majority that the children born after marriage will be tainted by the sinful sexual acts indulged in before marriage; much in the way that the dog fancier considers it necessary to kill the bitch after a *mésalliance* on the grounds that all her subsequent progeny will show traces of this one indiscretion. It is partly for this reason, and partly because every man has a natural disinclination to be burdened with the cost and trouble of rearing some other man's child, that the discovery that the girl he has married is not *virgo intacta* is likely to spoil his honeymoon and to cause him to watch the calendar with anxious eyes.

At last women are beginning to realize the unfairness of all this. They are beginning to question the male's exclusive claim to the right to indulge in extra- and pre-marital sexual adventure. They are taking the standpoint that, at any rate where sex is concerned, the girl has the same rights as the man. And the emancipation of woman has given them the power to act on this viewpoint. The very fact that so many women are economically free enables them to flout the man-made conventions to which their mothers, in dire fear of

MARRY OR BURN

being unable to secure a husband, submitted without the slightest idea of rebellion.

It is not alone the emancipation of woman that has induced this attitude. It is the dissemination and increased efficacy of birth control technique. The modern girl knows that with care she can reduce the chances of conception to a minimum; and that even if the worst happens and biological consequences ensue, it does not necessarily mean going to the streets for a living. She is prepared to take chances that twenty years ago would have caused a girl in respectable circles to turn bilious with fright.

In this she has right on her side. No one can deny that, in a State where monogamy prevails, or where the number of women exceeds considerably the number of men, a law which brands as outcasts those females who fulfil their destiny, is an unjust and immoral law. As it is, by all the canons of law, of religion, of respectability, the unmarried woman is denied the right to love.

The Christian attitude towards sexual intercourse outside marriage is typically expressed by Dr. F. W. Foerster in his *Marriage and the Sex Problem*. Hear him, this parroter of canned pap:

UNMARRIED WOMAN'S RIGHT TO LOVE

"The prohibition of all sex relationships outside marriage is in reality an essential step towards the emancipation of the Eros, because in setting up sacred forms for the union of men and women we connect sexual love with all the higher interests and feelings of humanity. Long before the awakening of sexual instincts, children should become thoroughly accustomed in their whole inner life always to think of the union of a man and a woman as a lifelong tie of fate and education." ¹

Stuff and nonsense! Was ever greater drivel given the dignity of print? Consider what this means. It means that approximately two million women in Great Britain alone are to be condemned to live and die virgins, to go to their graves without, during the whole of their thirty years of sex life, having on one single occasion fulfilled the function which alone justifies, so far as nature is concerned, their right to existence. With monogamy enshrined as the only legal form of marriage, with sex experience outside the marital state condemned as sin, there is no other course possible for these two million surplus women than to live the lives of nuns in order to obtain the blessing of the clergy and the approval

¹ F. W. Foerster, *Marriage and the Sex Problem*, trans. by Meyrick Booth, B.Sc., Ph.D., p. 24.

MARRY OR BURN

of society. There cannot be any complete physiological functioning in a State which only allows eroticism inside marriage. These surplus women might as well castrate themselves and have done with it.

It has taken woman the best part of two thousand years to realize the enormity of this injustice imposed upon her by man. It has taken her nineteen centuries to pluck up the courage to indulge in amorous adventure outside marriage, to trample on the old concept of virginity as a virgin, to spit in man's face when he calls her a whore, to thumb her nose at those of the older generation who still pluck their skirts aside and look the other way when they hear of an unmarried girl having slept with a man.

The illegitimate child remains something of a problem. Society, in spite of its sophistication, still looks dubiously at the girl who messes up things by bringing into the world an unwanted baby. Society is as hypocritical as ever. It is prepared to overlook, in deference to the sex equality preached by the modernists, pre-marital amours so long as there are no embarrassing results. But, with the coming upon the scene of a child, it is apt

UNMARRIED WOMAN'S RIGHT TO LOVE

to treat as something of an outcast the girl who is unsuccessful in bludgeoning the father into marriage.

The burdening of the child with illegitimacy is an example of a silly and cruel punishment applied to someone guilty of no misdemeanor. On this ground alone should there be no obloquy attached to the child born out of wedlock. And if a woman elects to have a baby, the fact that she cannot induce a man to marry her should provide no obstacle to her indulging that desire.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

WANTED: A SANE SYSTEM OF DIVORCE

DIVORCE is as old as marriage. It was almost universal amongst primitive and ancient races. *The Laws of Manu* allowed a man to divorce his wife for immorality, for drunkenness, for thriftlessness, for sterility, for bitterness of speech; the laws of Mohammed allowed a woman to divorce a husband afflicted with so common a thing as stinking breath, or an offensive rhinitis. Moses, and his polygamous compatriots, too, allowed divorce far more easily and frequently than appears from a casual reading of the Bible. There is a passage in Deuteronomy which reads:

“When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man’s wife.”

WANTED: A SANE SYSTEM OF DIVORCE

This extract is from the Authorized Version, but if we read for the words "some uncleanness," the substitution of "some unseemly thing" as rendered in the Revised Version, it reduces the ambiguity not at all. There was no process at law necessary. All that was required was the writing out by the husband of a document, called a bill of divorcement, which was signed and witnessed and delivered to the wife; much as a landlord gives to a tenant a notice to quit. The "uncleanness" or the "unseemly thing," whichever translation of the Hebrew script we accept, was an elastic accusation covering a multiplicity of offenses. Despite all the moralistic efforts of the exegetical Christian apologists, there are indications that the school founded by the Jewish Rabbi Hillel gave to this law of Moses the widest possible interpretation.

It was the Pauline gospel, with its mysticism and asceticism, which, coincidentally with its toleration of marriage as a vice, condemned and frowned upon divorce in any circumstances. Thus:

"And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:

MARRY OR BURN

But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.”¹

Christ repudiated the Levitical bill of divorce-ment. In answer to the Pharisees who asked if it were not lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause, in accordance with the laws of Moses, He said:

“Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

“Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”

It is noteworthy that adultery on the part of the husband was only recognized where the woman in question was another man's wife: in the

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 10-11.

WANTED: A SANE SYSTEM OF DIVORCE

case of a single woman it was either fornication or polygamy. This was in accordance with the view of the wife as the property of her husband. Christ's condemnation of adultery was not on the score of morals at all, but on that of violation of one man's property by another, and the natural distaste of any man for being burdened with the expense of rearing another man's offspring.¹

There is much confusion in the New Testa-

¹ Adultery, in ancient times, was subject to terrible punishment; thus in Leviticus we read:

"The man that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death."

Again in Deuteronomy:

"If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman; so shalt thou put away evil from Israel. If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you."

In 1650 adultery was a capital crime in England, and Wieth-Knudsen, quoting Secher, says: "In medieval Danish law he (the husband) had the right to kill his wife and her lover if he caught them *in flagranti* and brought the blood-stained sheets and bed-clothes into court as evidence."

MARRY OR BURN

ment. The accounts of Matthew and Mark contradict each other. The one holds that according to Jesus divorce is permissible in the case of fornication by the wife, and the man may remarry; the other holds as strongly that remarriage is allowable for no cause whatever. St. Paul was equally contradictory. After thundering against divorce on any grounds at all, on the assumption that marriage, though a sort of concession to weakness and vice, was, when entered into, a sacrament enduring till the day of death; he tinkered with the notion that the fact of one partner being an unbeliever was sufficient ground for divorce. The man wobbled on this as on many other points.

Gradually, as it was seen that St. Paul's prophecy of the imminent ending of the world seemed a bit hasty, the old Levitical concept of marriage, as a means of populating the earth, was resuscitated. And then for nineteen hundred years Christianity muddled and mucked up the whole sex opus: even in matrimony it made of the procreative act an ineffably dirty affair on a level with evacuating the bowels or urinating; and, at

WANTED: A SANE SYSTEM OF DIVORCE

the same time, it glorified the ultimate result of the act as something calculated to make God and Jesus cheer in sheer delight.

And all the time its priests seized on those words of Christ's: "Those whom God hath joined, let no man put asunder," and chanted them into people's ear hebdomadally, until, shivering and trembling, Christians stuck to their marriage vows through thick and thin. Before 1563, when the Council of Trent passed its famous edict,¹ no Church ceremony was necessary. The man and woman married themselves; they divorced themselves. And there was no law against polygamy. The Church might bless the union, but that was all it could do—any ceremony or ritual was superfluous and carried neither weight nor force.

With the passing of the control of marriage into the hands of the ecclesiastical authorities, the screws were tightened. The Roman Catholics made marriage a sacrament, declaring the union

¹ The decree of the Council of Trent was to compel all marriages to be celebrated in church, by a priest, and witnessed by two persons.

MARRY OR BURN

indissoluble;¹ the Protestants, by making the cost and difficulty of securing a divorce so heavy and so formidable, virtually ruled it out altogether.² Thus, in England, until so comparatively recent a date as 1858. The Act of 1857 provided for the formation of "The Court for Divorce and Matrimonial Causes," reduced the cost of proceedings,³ and enabled the husband to secure a divorce on the grounds of adultery, and the wife for adultery coupled with cruelty or desertion for two or more years, for incestuous adultery, for bigamous adultery, and for rape, sodomy or bes-

¹ Though the Roman Catholic Church refuses to recognize divorce, it sets up machinery in the form of the Holy Rota, whereby a marriage can be annulled, on the grounds presumably of non-consummation. There is, however, room for suspicion that these annulments are, to a big extent, luxuries reserved for those in a position to supplement the funds of the Church with substantial contributions, and that in special cases grounds for annulment may be made to acquire considerable and sudden elasticity.

² It was necessary, after receiving the sanction of the ecclesiastical courts, to apply to the House of Lords for a special bill, involving expenses ranging from £500 to £1,000.

³ The cost is still considerable unless the person applying for the divorce does not possess more than £50, in which case he or she can take advantage of what is known as "poor man's divorce." Even then the expenses involved amount to at least £10, which rules out a considerable proportion of those whose wealth does not total £50.

WANTED: A SANE SYSTEM OF DIVORCE

tiality. Re-marriage was allowed, but as a sop to the clergy, the right was granted to any parson to refuse to marry a divorced person.

Despite many amendments and amplifications of this original Act, it remains fundamentally the same, insomuch as adultery is the one ground on which divorce is obtainable. True, there has been one important concession. To-day, so far as concerns adultery, the sexes are on an equality; the Act of 1923 empowering the court to grant a divorce to a wife on the grounds of her husband's adultery alone. Before 1923, while adultery on the part of the wife was in itself sufficient, it was not so in the case of the husband: it had to be coupled with desertion. No divorce is made absolute until the end of six months, when, providing the King's Proctor has not intervened, the decree is made absolute on the initiative of the Petitioner, and when made absolute the parties are free to marry again.

Other countries have adopted a saner attitude, notably Sweden, China and some of the American States, where there are many grounds for divorce; and Soviet Russia, where divorce is granted automatically for the asking.

MARRY OR BURN

II

The main object of the law would seem to be the absolute prevention of divorce by mutual consent. The State and the clergy stubbornly continue to look upon marriage as a beatific institution, infinitely desirable as a union dissolvable only by death. The smashing of the marriage contract is the punishment meted out to the offending partner for the sin committed. Thus divorce is only allowable at the demand of one partner through the sin of the other; the fact that both desire the union to be severed presents, to the muddle-headed statesmen and theologians of most civilized countries, a cast-iron reason for marriage to continue. It is hard to conceive of a more complete example of abysmal stupidity and ignorance.¹

The law is not made, however, that cannot be circumvented. While divorce is supposedly granted only in cases where one party desires it, and the other is against it, actually the breaking

¹ Mr. Justice Hill in the course of a recent action stated: "When I try to apply common sense to divorce law, I am always knocking my head against a brick wall."

WANTED: A SANE SYSTEM OF DIVORCE

of the marriage contract by mutual consent is a common occurrence. The *modus operandi* is simplicity itself. The husband or the wife, but usually the husband, stays at some hotel with a woman hired for this express purpose, advises his wife of his action and how she can obtain the necessary evidence. The rest is a matter for the court. All the parties concerned, including the solicitors and the judge, know that the whole thing is a carefully prearranged affair; that there is collusion between husband and wife; that the proceedings constitute gargantuan farce; but, seriously and ponderously, they play their parts. The law and the requirements of the Protestant Church being satisfied, all is well.

There was a time when this attitude on the part of the law and the clergy, together with the heavy cost of court proceedings and the social ostracism that was the inevitable lot of the divorced person, was effective in restricting divorces to *bona fide* cases of adultery, and even at that, to the wealthy classes. But the past decade has seen an upheaval of the old social mores. Gone, with the downfall of religion, is the pariahism of the divorcee. Gone, too, are any feelings of revulsion

MARRY OR BURN

at being dragged through the court, or being featured in the newspapers. Divorce is fashionable. And for the poor there is a cheap form of divorce. The State has removed the ban which restricted divorce to one particular class.

III

The reason for divorce that is divulged in the court is seldom the real reason. What is given to the world is simply a reason which the requirements of the law necessitates: the actual reason lies much farther back. Divorce and separation, like love and marriage, are largely accidental: in many cases they depend on the jactitation of the colloids. A man's marriage may depend upon so simple a matter as the choice of his evening meal; his divorce may result from a severe attack of intestinal stasis or hyperinosis. In the tremendous main young persons of both sexes, in the stress of powerful emotion, which blinds every sense of proportion, justice, right and wrong, hurriedly make what may easily enough prove irrevocable contracts; for, despite the tremendous increase in and simplification of divorce, marriage

WANTED: A SANE SYSTEM OF DIVORCE

yet remains, in the majority of instances, a contract ending only with the death of one of the parties to it. In the choice of a lifetime's partner the average man exercises less discretion and makes fewer inquiries than in the purchase of a motor-car or a wrist watch; the average girl is far more discriminating in the purchase of an evening gown or a hat. There are circumstances where a sex-starved man, through sheer lack of opportunity, will make an alliance, which may easily become permanent, with a woman whose looks would give him, were he in a state of normalcy, a belly-ache. There are cases where a young and pretty girl, in the stress of passionate emotion, will give the exclusive right to the use of her body to a man whom ordinarily she would hesitate to sit beside at a movie.

The ceremony of marriage merely indicates that at that particular time a man and a woman are in a state of emotion popularly called love, which they acknowledge in public because in no other way can they satisfy the demands of that love without outraging the conventions imposed by society. The State and the Church have conspired to force the signing, at that precise and

MARRY OR BURN

particular moment of blind passion, of a lifelong partnership, the fundament of which may possibly be shot to pieces within twenty-four hours. Tightly closing their eyes to facts, they mendaciously assert that love must endure to the day of death, and by every means in their power they attempt to force people to live up to their egregious fiction and idealism. To a very big extent they succeed in this. They succeed in forcing hundreds of married people to live lives of hypocrisy.

It is contended that both parties know before they get married the terms of the contract, and that if they are not prepared to abide by those terms they should leave marriage alone. Thus the priests, the moralists, the old women of both sexes. Let them ask themselves, these pious whitewashed frauds, whether on such occasions as they were under the spell of the *grande passion* (if they ever were?) they thought of terms, agreements, contracts, *et al.*? As well ask whether a star actress taking the curtain after a successful first night is thinking of what she'll be doing when she's a wrinkled hag of seventy? When a young man is kissing a pretty blonde neither he nor she is thinking of whether they will want to kiss one another twenty

WANTED: A SANE SYSTEM OF DIVORCE

years hence or ten years hence. When he leads her up the church aisle he is thinking of his honeymoon, and, in the ecstasy of the moment, he is ready to sign any mortal document the parson cares to put before him. In short, he is in love, and every other thing can go to Gehenna.

If there is a greater gamble than marriage it has yet to be invented. The notion that a man and a girl can get to know each other before they are married is one of those absurdities that live on through the ages. Long engagement or short engagement, it matters not one jot which, both the man and the girl are utter strangers to each other on the day they get married. It is for this very excellent reason that the only way to find out whether a contemplated marriage will prove successful or disastrous, is to get married.

IV

Divorce is increasing rapidly in every European country and in the United States. Divorces are granted in the ratio of one to every six marriages in America and this ratio of divorces to marriages is increasing annually. But despite the

MARRY OR BURN

hugeness of the number, it by no means represents, in any but a fractional sense, the number of unhappy marriages. It is impossible to secure any figures worth the printing, but it may safely be asserted that of the marriages consummated each year 90 per cent. smash to splinters before their third anniversary.

The fact that marriages continue to exist by no means implies that those marriages are happy. The law still puts in the way of divorce as many obstacles as it can think of. In England what it has done in recent years is to cheapen the cost of obtaining a divorce—it has done little to simplify the securing of it. A strikingly unhappy marriage may still resist divorce. If the woman, while steering clear of actual immorality, refuses to divorce her husband for his sins, he can do nothing. Neither can she, if the position is reversed. Thousands of wives refuse to divorce their husbands for financial reasons, others find it more profitable to obtain a separation.¹ In many cases, for social rea-

¹ In a case reported in *The Daily Mail* of April 8th, 1930, brought by a Mrs. Bertha Lucy Gunn, it was stated that "Adultery was admitted, but Mrs. Gunn originally sought only a decree of judicial separation, in the belief that she would benefit more financially than if she secured a divorce with alimony."

WANTED: A SANE SYSTEM OF DIVORCE

sons alone, divorce is mutually inadmissible. For in all such cases the law demands its pound of flesh: it absolutely insists on immorality.¹

The moment that love ceases to exist is the moment for the dissolution of marriage, unless *both* parties to the contract, for reasons unconnected with love, wish to play the parts of hypocrites. The idea of divorce by mutual consent is nothing new. To the contrary, it is as old as civilization. The Romans, before the Christian era, allowed it; so did the Jews and the Hebrews. Milton advocated it nearly three hundred years ago. It is in operation in Sweden to-day. Soviet Russia goes one better and allows divorce at the request of either party.

Whatever points in its favor the State's objection to easy divorce may have had in the past, recent developments have bundled them into the

¹ According to *The Daily Mail* report of a divorce case (*The Daily Mail*, April 16th, 1930), Lord Merrivale, commenting on the secrecy practiced by petitioners for divorce stated: "You can see what very grave considerations affecting public interests arise in many of these cases where there is, perhaps, a conflict between the wish of the judge to put an end to an existing state of wretchedness and the duty which he owes to the community at large, especially under the provisions of the Matrimonial Causes Act."

MARRY OR BURN

ash-pit. The divorce laws have always been formulated for the express purpose of keeping together the family and protecting the interests of the children. To a very big extent these laws have become superfluous. They are unnecessary for the simple reason that, in the majority of instances, there is no family to protect. The increase in birth control knowledge and the augmented efficacy of contraceptives, together with the diminished fertility of men and women, have brought into being the childless marriage. This fact may as well be recognized, and with its recognition, as Bertrand Russell and Judge Lindsey point out, the position should be faced that the childless marriage must be as easily dissolvable as it is consummated, and at the request of one partner. And at such request, too, as Bertrand Russell advocates, divorce should be readily granted in all cases of insanity, of grave crime, of habitual drunkenness, and of certain diseases.

Admittedly the presence of children complicates things. But here again it is time the antiquated notions respecting the matter be scrapped. The theological view that the procreative act is a holy and spiritual thing is so much twaddle. One

WANTED: A SANE SYSTEM OF DIVORCE

might as well talk of the divinity and the holiness of a bitch giving birth to a litter of puppies, or a hen hatching a clutch of chickens. One might as well croon over the mysticism and holiness of an attack of arthritis or sciatica, of a syphilitic infection, or of an ingrowing toe-nail.

The only difference where there are children is the resultant problem of what to do with them should their parents wish to go their ways and chase other specimens of *homo sapiens*. Obviously the woman, having suffered the pain of bringing the child into the world, should have the first claim, and if she wants the youngster, the husband should be mulcted for the cost of its rearing until it is old enough to earn its own living. If the mother does not want it, then the father should be either allowed to keep it himself or alternately compelled to pay for its proper upbringing by other hands. The talk of the child suffering through having no parental care, love, guidance and control, is so much bilge. What child in these modern days gets any parental love, guidance or control? If the offspring of wealthy parents, it knows nurses, governesses and teachers far better than it knows its own parents, whom, in any

MARRY OR BURN

case, it seldom sees; if the product of poor parents, it spends half its days in school and the other half in the streets.

The emancipation of woman, her competition with man and her invasion of what for centuries have been looked upon as the male's own special preserves, have knocked the bottom out of the contention that easy divorce enables man to use a woman to his heart's content and then throw her aside like a discarded shirt and take another one, repeating the process until he is sated. Any scheme of divorce by mutual consent, once it was properly recognized, would enable the woman to make with man what terms she thought fit or could secure: there might, for instance, be a fixed rate of compensation payable in accordance with the time that elapsed before the marriage contract was broken by the man. In all cases where, from any cause, the woman could not earn her living, some such compensation would be indicated; in cases where, through hard work and advancing age, there was markedly decreased marriageable value, again would pecuniary compensation be indicated.

There is no ground for the contention that easy

WANTED: A SANE SYSTEM OF DIVORCE

divorce makes for unhappy marriages. To the contrary, it acts precisely the reverse. The indissolubility of the marriage bond is the greatest cause of unhappiness: it makes for the development of factors that kill affection and curse marriage. The fact that divorce is obtainable at the request of either partner keeps both up to the scratch. Knowing that his wife would promptly sever the marriage knot if neglected or abused, the husband would be more careful, and would cultivate the art of love as he did in his courting days. Knowing that her spouse could leave her at his will, the wife would think twice before running up big bills at her dressmaker's, and instead of gallivanting off to the theatre would meet him on his return from business with a kiss and a cup of tea.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE RIGHT TO PRACTICE BIRTH CONTROL

IT is strange that even to-day there is much reluctance on the part of any married man and particularly on the part of any woman to admit that he or she does not want children. Any questioning on this score is resented by all except the members of the ultra-modern set, much as, a few years ago, were resented any queries respecting belief in the existence of God, the resurrection, or the theophanic birth of Christ. There is, however, to-day no need for any such questioning—the evidence that modern married couples have the smallest intention of being burdened with the care and expense of children is abundant. Birth control, like prostitution, is something that is publicly supported while it is privately decried. Most children born are accidents, the indignant statements of many to the contrary notwithstanding.

It is part and parcel of this same hypocrisy that,

RIGHT TO PRACTICE BIRTH CONTROL

except for a minority composed of the intelligentsia, and the "bright young things" of Greenwich Village, everybody subscribes to the theologic belief that the purpose of marriage is procreation. The hoary six-thousand-year-old precept "Be fruitful and multiply," mouthed by the anthropomorphic god of the Hebrews at a time when the population of the earth was supposed to be a mere handful of people, has been, except for the period when St. Paul was drumming his ascetic gospel into every available ear, the sole justification for and purpose of marriage. The dirty, sinful act of coition was only to be pardoned because of its necessity for the production of children.

It is largely owing to this that the clergy have put up such a long and hard fight against birth control; that they have done their utmost to get it universally labelled an obscene practice, as they have succeeded in doing in France, in Belgium, in the United States and in the Irish Free State. Even in the days when large families were the vogue, it is doubtful if marriage, except in monumentally rare instances, was entered into for the express purpose of procreation, of which fact the

MARRY OR BURN

clergy must have been fully aware. Their argument that the dissemination of information respecting contraceptives is causing coitus in the married state to become mere sexual enjoyment is the veriest tosh: it never was and never will be anything else. The children resulting from the sexual act have always, in the huge main, been unthought of at the time of conception: it is extremely probable that a realization of the possibility of impregnation would have sufficed to induce the adoption of precautionary measures sufficient in many cases to prevent their birth.

Coincident with this widespread belief in the inseparability of love and procreation, is the even more ecumenic notion that children cement marriage by conducing to the endurance of happiness. Friends and acquaintances, shaking sorrowfully their heads at my childless state, have expatiated at length on the comfort and happiness that children bring to married life. I have laughed in their faces. For, with all respect, the idea is nonsensical. To the decided contrary, the number of marriages that have been ruined by the birth of children must run into countless millions. Even to-day, when few marriages produce more than two or

RIGHT TO PRACTICE BIRTH CONTROL

three youngsters, the number of those smashed in the process must run into thousands, in the nineteenth century, when it was usual for each couple to produce a litter, the figure must have been a prodigious one. In nine cases out of ten the advent of children means the end of love between the parents. It is queer that so self-evident a truth should be so persistently denied or overlooked. If the mother does not concentrate her attention on the children to such an extent that she cannot give to her husband undivided attention, much less love, she hates him for continually causing her to be *enceinte*. One can well imagine the picture drawn by Gertrude Beasley in *My First Thirty Years* of her mother, after the birth of her thirteenth child, instructing two of her grown-up daughters to share her bed, sleeping one on each side of her, with a poker and a shovel at hand for use in case of the father's approach.

But however married men and women may parade views respecting the procreative purpose of marriage and the happiness which children bring, in the privacy of their bedchambers they make vast and continuous efforts to defeat God's object. The investigations made by Dr. G. V. Ham-

MARRY OR BURN

ilton and Kenneth Macgowan into one hundred American marriages disclosed the revealing facts that

“only three men and six women said they had never used contraceptives, and the reason assigned was sterility. In other words, *not a single man or woman in the total group had refrained from the use of birth control methods at some time except those who had found it unnecessary because of infertility.*”¹ (Authors’ italics.)

According to the same authors, another investigation, conducted by Dr. Katherine Bement Davis, revealed very similar results. Of the 985 women who returned answers to the questionnaire, 74 per cent. admitted they had used contraceptives. Incidentally these figures show the ease with which birth control appliances can be obtained in a country where literature describing contraceptive methods comes under the ban of obscenity, and the sale of all birth control appliances is illegal. These appliances are sold, not as contraceptives, but as venereal prophylactics.

¹ Hamilton and Macgowan, *What is Wrong with Marriage?* p. 98.

RIGHT TO PRACTICE BIRTH CONTROL

II

Modern woman is rebelling at the idea of spending her married life bearing and suckling children, to say nothing of the risks to her health, her beauty and even to her life every time she has an accouchement. The fact that her mother or her grandmother was content to take to her bed every twelve or eighteen months for the purpose of populating the local earth cuts no ice with the emancipated girl of to-day. The modern husband has his eyes open as well. The prospect of having to forgo his fancy clothes, or his patent shoes, or his bi-weekly visits to the theater for the dubious pleasures of listening to the cacophonizing of a parcel of children and studying pedotrophy brews within him no feelings of delight.

That in many instances there is much quarreling over the matter is certain. For there still remains a minority of men who for one reason or another desire to propagate their kind. It may be some insane notion of leaving behind an heir; it may be the wish to afford concrete proof of one's sexual prowess; it may be with a view to provid-

MARRY OR BURN

ing one's wife with employment that will keep her safely within doors; it may be a combination of all three. But, whatever the reason, child-bearing should not be forced upon any woman. If either partner to the union is against procreation, the need for contraceptive practices is sufficiently indicated.

Whatever objections the male partner may have to children, compared to those which his wife can bring forward, they count as mere monkey-shines. The act of parturition in itself is a big danger to every woman. If it does not actually kill her off, it very often maims her for life. There were 2,920 deaths in childbirth in the United Kingdom during 1928; there were 2,690 in 1927. In the United States it is estimated there is an annual death-roll of 25,000 from this cause. Few women escape serious tears during parturition, and these lacerations, in the majority of cases, are never properly surgically repaired; the superficial sutures often leaving the perineum in a damaged condition and the woman an invalid for life. Permanent changes of structure result very often; there is a distinct danger of eclampsia. Appendicitis, cirrhosis of the liver, spleen,

RIGHT TO PRACTICE BIRTH CONTROL

the formation of tumors, peritonitis, and *prolapsus recti*, are amongst the pathological conditions which every woman risks during pregnancy and the puerperium. It is noteworthy that osteomalacia is almost unknown amongst nulliparous women.

Even with the recital of this catalog of grisly risks the full tale is not told. There are other inevitable results, the realization of which is sufficient to cause the modern woman to set a stern face against and go to unending trouble in the avoidance of pregnancy. I refer to the danger to woman's charm and beauty, which is incidental to childbearing. The breasts, loaded with their cargo of milk, are distended and rarely regain their virginal appearance. Often they are forever after flabby, wrinkled and pendulous. Even savages are aware of this—the Hawaiian and the Samoan women regularly practice abortion to prevent the ruination of the beauty of their breasts. For the same reason, though it is camouflaged under the pretense of health or social reform, many modern women who find themselves with an unwanted baby to nurse, avoid suckling. By this means they may prevent elongation of the nip-

MARRY OR BURN

ples, but they do not come off scathless. Suckle or not, the breasts are rarely the same again; the abdomen, through the swelling of the loaded womb, is hugely distended: the abdominal skin, after parturition, is permanently wrinkled and flabby. Often, too, there is some pelvic disturbance, and the permanent widening of the vagina is not without its effect on future sexual intercourse.

These dangers to health and appearance outweigh by a thousand times any dangers likely to result from the practice of contraceptive methods. All the evil results of birth control are grossly exaggerated; many are wholly imaginary, or are invented by moralists and theologians prejudiced against birth control. Provided the proper methods are employed and reasonable antiseptic measures taken, there is no risk of any injury to health resulting.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE NEED FOR LEGALIZED ABORTION

THE punishment of abortion, it seems to me, is itself a crime. There is no argument which justifies birth control which does not justify abortion. Indeed the line of demarcation between the one and the other is often dubious: at least one appliance openly sold as a contraceptive device is actually an abortifacient. The English law, which brands as criminal abortion any attempt, whether or not successful, to empty the contents of the uterus, is farcical. Every biologist and every doctor knows that this law can only be enforced in very exceptional cases, that it is broken a hundred times every day. Occasionally a bungler is caught and pays the penalty, but for every such case a thousand others go free. In France, half a million abortions, at a modest estimate, are performed annually; in the United States, according to Dr. Stone, the number per

MARRY OR BURN

annum varies from 500,000 to 2,000,000; it may be asserted with safety that these figures are representative of what is happening in Great Britain.

Behind the modern concept of abortion as a crime deserving of the most severe punishment is the fact that the destruction of the child before birth destroys the one conclusive piece of evidence of immorality outside marriage, and the Christian notion that the destruction of the results of God's blessing of the marriage sacrament is a crime against God.¹ St. Augustine went so far as tacitly to admit the possibility of the dead embryo rising with its parents on the day of resurrection to heaven and immortal life.

I have an idea that a big number of persons, if they could be induced to whisper the truth, are inclined, in the privacy of their bedchambers, to look upon the inducing of a miscarriage as the mildest of peccadillos. But despite this firm private opinion, in public conversation they will back

¹ Thus even where the mother's life is in distinct danger, craniotomy is frowned upon by the Catholic Church, the Cæsarean operation, with its formidable risk to the woman, being advocated. In fact any instrumental interference, so long as it is not directed against the life of the fetus, is allowed.

THE NEED FOR LEGALIZED ABORTION

up with noise and gusto the moralist who proclaims abortion the blackest of crimes. The reason for this is analogous to the one which actuates man in condemning and vilifying prostitutes in public while regularly sleeping with them in private; that causes people to proclaim hectically against those who write and publish naughty literature while sneaking into a bookshop and making frantic efforts to secure the latest obscenity; that induces those most vehement in advocating the punishment of abortion under English law themselves sending to Holland or Belgium, where the operation can be performed with little legal risk, such of their female relatives as are threatened with the impending birth of an unwanted child. Its root lies in the hypocrisy of mankind; a hypocrisy that causes the individual to be ashamed of everything which does not concur with the current standard of morality. It is this same hypocrisy that induces respect for laws and allegiance to customs which are nothing but gross infringements of the liberty of the subject.

There are, it is true, a number of men and women belonging to the so-called advanced set, who advocate the rescinding of all laws against

MARRY OR BURN

abortion, but the reasons they bring forward in support of their argument are reasons which will not bear analysis. To the contrary, these arguments are based either on such a dubious mess of chicanery and punk as eugenics, or on such palpable and superannuated errors as that the earth is in danger of overcrowding owing to its increasing population, or that unemployment and poverty would be alleviated by a decreased birth-rate. These arguments are as old as the hills: they were part of the stock platitudes paraded by Plato and Aristotle.

Unfortunately, the only reason which justifies the pregnant woman, whether she be married or single, in practicing abortion, like the ultimate reason for most human actions, is a purely personal, and therefore, selfish one. As such it does not commend itself to a society which has a penchant for decorating, camouflaging and justifying its actions by appeals to patriotism, morality and altruism. This reason then is simply the right of every woman to decide for herself whether or not she shall bear a child. The man's opinion, or his wish, whether he be the lover who has got the woman into trouble, or the husband

THE NEED FOR LEGALIZED ABORTION

bent on populating the local earth, does not count. Only an utterly selfish, stupid man would attempt to induce the woman he is supposed to love to trundle about for weeks on end barrel-bellied and ashamed, to suffer the pains and dangers of parturition, and to run the risk of permanent damage to what beauty she possesses, all against her will.

In the freedom of the individual woman to do what she wishes with her own body lies the one justification for the legalization of abortion. The woman's right to destroy the fetus before viability co-exists with her right to prevent impregnation. The admitted fact that any extended pursuance of this policy is opposed to the interests of the race is no argument against its validity. Policies advocated "for the good of the race and of the country" may, and often do, penalize certain sections of society to an intolerable degree.

No argument can justifiably be brought against abortion that cannot with equal justification be brought against contraception. The fact that the Malthusians and the eugenists are busy providing a remedy for an inexistent disease,

MARRY OR BURN

and the further fact that much of the sterility that opponents and supporters of birth control alike attribute to contraceptive methods is in reality due to other causes, do not affect the issue. The practice of birth control is universal and habitual. Because of this the refusal to legalize abortion on the ground that it is dangerous to the race is as pointless and futile as is the advocacy of abortion as a means of preventing or reducing poverty. For although present-day birth control methods are credited with greatly exaggerated successes, it is idle to deny that sooner or later one may with confidence expect the evolution of a foolproof method, or, failing this, the wholesale recourse to self-sterilization, with the consequent reduction of the number of abortions to a negligible quantity. When that time comes no patriotic, humanitarian, economic, or other ideal will prevent the extermination of the race.

If this is admitted, the need for the legalization of abortion is conceded, for it becomes difficult to see how the present attitude towards induced abortion can be maintained without penalizing to a monstrous degree those women who are raped, whether the rape be one of the nu-

THE NEED FOR LEGALIZED ABORTION

merous instances against which there is no legal redress or one of the rarer criminal cases.

The injustice of the present position is in its branding of the woman who resorts to abortion and the one who performs the operation as criminals, and the punishment of them as such. If society contented itself with social ostracism such as it metes out to the mother of an illegitimate child or to a daughter of joy, it would not matter so much. Nor would the moral culprit have any real room for complaint: the breaker of social rules cannot reasonably expect the makers of those rules to cheer their attempts at rebellion. But the dubbing of abortion a crime does not prevent abortion: it merely drives the mother of the unwanted child to hole-and-corner methods with their inseparable risks. Skillfully performed, the operation of abortion is not a dangerous one. The danger and the fatal results are due to its performance by quacks and bunglers with inadequate instruments and under unsuitable conditions. In Soviet Russia, where abortion is legal and is performed by surgeons, it is rare for a case to result in death.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

CHILD-BEARING MUST BE MADE ATTRACTIVE

MODERN statesmen, even in countries where birth control verges on being a criminal offense, seem bent on discouraging the breeding of children. True, in fat tomes and windy discussions, they decry the falling birth-rate, they harp on the duty of the married to procreate; but coincidentally they blandly continue to pass laws and devise prohibitions that cause men and women to try secretly every known dodge likely to prevent conception, and to go to endless trouble and expense in order to empty the uterus should conception ensue.

The blunt truth is that people will only breed children when it pays them to breed them. In its ultimate analysis there is little difference in the way people look on breeding children and breeding Pekingese dogs, or cows, or silver foxes, or chickens, or Angora rabbits, or guinea-pigs, or

CHILD-BEARING MADE ATTRACTIVE

white mice. Make the game attractive enough and a considerable number of people will display the keenest interest in it. Make of it an unprofitable piece of drudgery and they will lose interest with surprising promptness. And this precisely is what, in every civilized country under the sun, the State has done or is doing. Before anyone gets indignant at this statement, and begins to hurl invective at my head, let him consider the position in England.

Before 1870 children were plentiful; they were bred in shoals. Very nearly every married couple worked hard to produce as many as possible: the father who could only trot out a solitary child was in imminent danger of being sneered at as *impotentia generandi*. At that time there was no lack of work for willing laborers. The machine age had commenced, but it had not overreached itself as it has to-day. There were no laws or restrictions respecting child labor: the youngsters could be put to work at an age which to-day sounds ridiculous. In consequence the breeding of children was a paying proposition, and the couple who could produce youngsters at short intervals up to a fairly advanced age were providing the best pos-

MARRY OR BURN

sible form of insurance for themselves, to wit, some one to work and keep them in their senility. The passing of the Education Act of 1870 smashed to smithereens the whole lovely scheme. Children, instead of being a source of revenue, became expensive luxuries: always a nuisance, they became now a costly nuisance. Every successive step in the legislative field where education was concerned added hugely to the burden. Politicians and sociologists prated about the benefits of State education: not one of the lot seemed to realize that they were driving men and women in wholesale numbers to explore the mysteries of birth control and creating thousands of clients for the professional abortionists and the peddlers of "Female Pills."

In recent years the education-mongers have gone mad. They have still further raised the school-leaving age until, on every hand, one sees gaudily-dressed young men of the working classes carrying school-bags. Not only do they attend school, but they dress like so many actors; they play games requiring expensive equipment and special clothes. The result is that even one child represents a serious mortgage on the year's in-

CHILD-BEARING MADE ATTRACTIVE

come; two, in the majority of cases, mean poverty; three spell utter ruin. The modern married couple realize that the breeding of children means looking forward to at least fifteen expensive years before they can expect to draw a penny in return; and not unnaturally they brave the wrath of God, the State and the devil in their efforts to avoid the incubus.

Thus to-day more than ever before the children that are born are accidents. And the time is coming, and coming rapidly, when there will be no accidents. Either through the discovery of a perfect and simple method of preventing conception, through self-sterilization, or abortion, in the near future, the number of babies born is going to be shockingly small. Theologians and patriots, pedobaptists and moralists, may hold up their hands in protest and mouth platitudinous nothings respecting the glory of motherhood and the duty to God; patriots and Puritans may deplore the sensual selfishness of the age and foretell its passing; but nothing alters the incontrovertible truth of this statement. Even the eugenists may cease prattling their futilities: it is not going to be a case of arranging marriages between people who

MARRY OR BURN

are most fitted to produce the best children, of breeding human beings as dog-fanciers do blood-hounds; it is going to be a case of thanking God for anyone who can be persuaded to breed them at all.

Sooner or later the State will be compelled to take steps towards making motherhood infinitely more attractive than it is at present. Neither theology thunderings respecting the wrath of God which will fall upon those who refuse to replenish the earth, nor State appeals to patriotism, will have the slightest effect—the day of these puerilities is gone for good. Nothing less than pecuniary recompense will suffice to persuade women to undergo voluntarily the pains and dangers of childbirth, to flourish shamelessly the physical signs of prolificacy—nothing but the certainty of reward will induce men in the main to sanction the adoption of so troublesome and so expensive a hobby as the rearing of children. The only other alternative is in direct opposition to the proposals of judges, doctors, sociologists, and even most theologians. It is the encouraging of idiots, morons, and all who are too simple to adopt any preventive measures, to spawn the earth with their kind.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

INCEST

IT has always been to me a matter to marvel over that an otherwise sane, normal, good-humored individual, of either male or female sex, should rear up in hot anger and disgust and call down the wrath of God and man upon any two closely related persons who elect to marry or to sleep together. One has only to mention incest to see upon the listener's countenance an expression of horror commensurate with the looks one encounters if reference is made to a case of syphilis or to the sin which caused God to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. In Boccaccio's remarkable story, the influence of just such an attitude caused Pasquerella to kill her son and daughter while they slept. No more is explainable the attitude of the State towards incestuous intercourse, the punishment of which is of the same degree of severity as that accorded to rape.

This idea of incest as a crime is strictly a code

MARRY OR BURN

determined by the religious belief and morality in vogue. In primitive races there is no such ban. Savages, like animals, have no scruples respecting intercourse between relatives. In many tribes of American Indians the males have children by their sisters, mothers and daughters; in Madagascar the natives permit marriage between brother and sister; in Java the Kalongs allow sons to have intercourse with their mothers; the Teitans do the same; in Ceylon, the Waddas allow near relatives to marry as they please; the Eskimos are just as loose; the Chilian Coucous take as wives mother and daughter at the same time.

But enough of savages. Ransacking history reveals that in ancient civilization incestuous unions, so far from being banned, were in many cases encouraged. There was, for instance, the famous eighteenth Egyptian Dynasty in which ruler after ruler committed incest. Ahmose I, founder of the Dynasty, married his sister; his son, Amenhotep I, did the self-same thing; the Queen Hatshepsut, herself the product of a union between brother and sister, married her half-brother Thutmose II. Amongst the Syrians and the Athenians, the marriages of brothers and sisters were every-

INCEST

day occurrences; according to Tertullian, the Persians and the Parthians had intercourse with their own mothers; Attila took as wife his daughter Esca; the kings of Teneriffe and Siam married their sisters; the Roman Emperor Claudius took to his bed his niece Agrippina; the Mongols married either sisters, mothers or grandmothers, and took two or more at a time; the ancient Russians did the same thing; Dionysius married Doris and Aristomache together; even in ancient Ireland fathers married daughters and brothers married sisters. Corsicans preferred to marry blood relatives; the royalty of Siam favored brothers and sisters uniting in marriage: so did the Burmese; so, too, the Persians, the Medes, the Cambodians, and the Incas of Peru. In many cases they had their gods to set the example. Thus Osiris married his sister goddess Isis; Yama, the Vedic king and god, acted similarly with his sister Yami; the Chaldean gods and goddesses had intercourse promiscuously. Even Amen-Ra ¹ selected his own mother for bed-mate.

¹ Few worshippers in Christian Churches when sonorously chanting "Amen" at the end of their prayers realize that this is the name of a pagan god.

MARRY OR BURN

The gods of the monotheistic religions were against incestuous unions. Allah, in the Koran, thunders against incest as Jehovah does in the Old Testament. Yet so strong was the predilection to consanguineous marriage that the Scriptural heroes thumbed their noses at Moses and his laws. Thus Abraham married Sarah, his half-sister; Nahor married his niece; Amnon, who raped his sister Tamar, could have married her with the King's consent, as is evidenced in the Second Book of Samuel; Lot's daughters both bore sons to their father. All of which offenses came under the Levitical ban and were punishable by death or exile. Their continuance and commonness is indicated by Ezekiel's catalogue of the sins in Jerusalem and St. Paul's condemnation in his First Epistle to the Corinthians.

It is, however, on these old Levitical laws that the modern attitude towards incest and consanguinity is based. How precisely these rules came to be made and put into the mouth of the god of the Israelites is a matter of pure conjecture. Anthropologists differ in their views. Many are of opinion that the harmful results of inbreeding were realized in those early days, and

INCEST

steps were taken to provide for the influx of fresh blood by prohibiting intercourse between relatives; which, seeing that in those times there were prevalent the haziest notions respecting procreation, seems pretty dubious. Westermarck, on the other hand, is of opinion that the Darwinian natural selection hypothesis comes in here; that those races practicing in-breeding died out, while the exogamists flourished: an idea which one finds much difficulty in accepting. My own hypothesis, which I present not dogmatically, but as a guess with as much chance of hitting the truth as any other guess, is that the horror of incest was of gradual growth, eventually coming to fruition simultaneously with the development of property rights and the end of polyandry. Incest and polyandry are bed-mates. Wherever women are scarce, and the males, through isolation, danger or other causes, are prevented from seeking women of other races or families, polyandry is common; and for precisely the same reasons, incest is common, too. Man is not inclined to turn up his nose at any particular woman, however ugly and unappetizing she may be, if there is no other female for the choosing. It

MARRY OR BURN

depends, of course, on the age and libido of the man, but, generally speaking, were nothing better available he would have intercourse with his doting grandmother. In modern civilization, poverty, by limiting man's opportunities, acts analogously. The case-histories given by Krafft-Ebing are mostly concerned with peasants and debauchees. Zola in *La Terre* and Sue in *The Mysteries of Paris* refer to the widespread practice of incest amongst the lower orders. Anyone who keeps his ears open knows that in every village and town carefully-hushed up instances of incest are of common occurrence.

As man became more civilized and prosperous, as he mixed more with other families, he turned covetous eyes on the pretty daughters of other men. At first this probably applied only to the chief or leader of a family. Naturally he preferred a good-looking youngster of another clan to his grandmother or his mother; naturally, too, he took steps to secure her by purchase, by exchange, or by capture. Once this step became a custom the taboo of what the chief did not wish to do himself was, for the good of his people, a sure and certain thing. We see this principle involved

INCEST

in all taboos, whether they be against religion, gambling, drinking, smoking or pornography. True, incest survived in civilized races, as we have seen. The Pharaohs practiced it, marrying their sisters and making them queens. Ptolemy Dionysus married his sister Cleopatra; Rameses II, Psammetichus and Artaxerxes all married their daughters. But here we are concerned with royalty; with men and with women who had grave objections to marrying any one who was not possessed of royal blood. In those days kings and queens had no tastes in common with shopkeepers and barrow-wheelers. The result is obvious. If there were available no maidens of equal rank to themselves that were not blood relations, they married their sisters or daughters and solved the problem that way. And similarly the reigning queens married their brothers and sons.

II

The ranking of incest as a crime in modern times seems to be due partly to theologic influence based on the Levitical prohibitions, which have succeeded in giving to sexual intercourse with relatives the concept of obscenity; but

MARRY OR BURN

mainly is it due, I am inclined to think, to the known evil effects of indiscriminate in-breeding. That the law in reality is more concerned with these reputed ill effects than with the purely ecclesiastical ban is evidenced in the fact that from time to time the Levitical impediments (apart from their amplification to the ridiculous apex reached in A. D. 506, under the ægis of the Christian Church in its war on marriage) were modified, until in the reign of Innocent III, marriages were permitted between relatives beyond the fourth degree inclusive, and the ruling adopted that *affinitas non parit affinitatem*. Subsequently various statutes were made and repealed, until The Marriage Act of 1835 made null and void unions between those related by blood and by marriage within the prohibited degrees. As yet, however, there was, apart from ecclesiastical coercion, no Act either defining incest or making of it a specific criminal offense. It was not until 1908 that The Punishment of Incest Act¹ was placed on the statute book, defining

¹ According to the Act: "An attempt to commit the offence of incest is a misdemeanour, punishable by imprisonment for not more than two years with or without hard labour."

INCEST

incest as sexual intercourse of a male with his mother, sister, daughter or granddaughter, punishable with penal servitude.

No one is going to deny that incest, sodomy, cunnilinctus, fellatio, masturbation, algolagny, are, to the normal individual, revolting habits; but the mere fact of a habit being revolting should not make of it a crime. Spitting in the street, or in a railway carriage; picking one's teeth in public; visiting exhibitions of fat women, fasting men, and human pseudo-hermaphrodites; watching performing lions; gaping at the sacred baboons on Monkey Hill; reading illustrated Sunday newspapers, are all, in my opinion, revolting habits, but I am not suggesting that those who find pleasure in such pursuits should be branded as criminals. No offense which does not seriously injure or endanger other members of society should rank as a crime against the State. In comparison with the above cited moral offenses the condemnation of a parrot to lifelong imprisonment, the slow bleeding to death of calves, the hunting of foxes, are, to my mind, facinorous outrages of gargantuan proportions.

Once one has succeeded in spitting out the

MARRY OR BURN

ridiculous and paralogical moral taboos foisted on one by religious tyranny, it is difficult to see how one can in any way, except as a matter of mere personal prejudice, seriously object to two relatives of opposite sexes living together and marrying even. The argument that failure to punish incest would lead to an enormous extension of its practice is the merest twaddle. Only a minority of near relatives—apart from those who have been segregated and are practically strangers to each other—will ever wish to sleep together. The average man, so long as there is a pretty girl for the finding, and the average woman, so long as there is an actor or a chauffeur flourishing passable looks, will be inclined to hurl the furniture at the sister or the brother who dares to make such a proposal.

To-day, the practice of incest is, with rare exceptions, confined to cretins, yokels, psychopaths, idiots, monomaniacs, hypochondriacs, *et al.* In other words it is confined to those whose chances of marrying or of having amorous adventure are extremely slender. And as regards the members of this unlucky minority, who have probably chased specimens of the opposite sex

INCEST

till their feet are sore, if in sheer desperation they do elect to have incestuous intercourse, the matter, strictly speaking, concerns themselves only. For I submit the one justifiable reason for prohibiting incestuous marriages was the risk of them resulting in a crop of idiots, or criminals, or weaklings, for some one to rear. That risk is already, in all cases, enormously minimized; in a huge proportion it does not exist, nor has it ever existed. The adventitiousness of mentality, the shattering blows that every hypothesis of congenital idiocy has recently received, the incidence of simplified and tremendously more efficacious contraceptive methods, the possibilities of State sterilization of undesirable citizens; cumulatively and definitely consign to perdition the one compelling reason for the making of incest a crime rather than a vice or an objectionable practice. True, the State cannot be expected to applaud those who have a liking for consanguineous intercourse, but it can, at any rate, draw the line at actually clapping them into jail.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

IN EPITOME

IT only remains to summarize the position already detailed and analyzed in the preceding pages of this work.

I have shown how St. Paul and the early Christian Fathers made the ghastly blunder of looking upon marriage as a pitiful alternative to promiscuous lust; I have shown how supposedly more enlightened ornaments of civilization through the centuries have tacked on to the brutal basic Christian edict the concept of woman, given or taken in marriage, as a piece of property destined for life to be used, according to the owner's whims and desires, as a passive fornicating instrument. I have shown how the new modernistic outlook differs only from the original Christian concept in that it concedes to the woman, as well as to the man, certain rights in this matter of fornication.

IN EPITOME

So stressed was, and is, in marriage the sexual factor on the one hand and on the other the property right with all its commercial concomitants, that the enormous significance of love, except as a synonym for fornication, has never been realized. Priest and layman, sanctimonious fanatic and atheist, alike confuse and confound lust, procreation and love. They never realize that the one is not necessarily connected with the others, and this initial and never-dying confusion has been and still is responsible for the illogical and senseless laws governing the existent institution of marriage, and indirectly for much of the unhappiness connected with marital life.

Society, whether primitive or civilized, has never understood love; never admitted its general evanescence; never realized that in any enduring form it is rare. More, it has blunderingly considered to be love what is nothing more than momentary sexual passion or attraction. It has conceded to be love the longing of man for fornication: a longing indistinguishable in its ultimate analysis from the sexual desire of the dog for the bitch. All of which means that despite the asseverations of the moralists to the contrary, the

MARRY OR BURN

ecclesiastical definition of love is indistinguishable from the sexual attraction which causes the male to patronize the prostitute. The uniting of a man and a woman desirous of indulging in fornication as man and wife merely gives to the sexual act between them the license of respectability and the sanctity of morality—it does not in any way distinguish between love and lust. For its own purposes it hypocritically dignifies by the name of love the identical factor which, in other circumstances, it denounces as lust. A Church which, after nineteen hundred years, still inscribes on its banner St. Paul's injunction to "marry or burn" deserves the strongest denunciation for its sacrifice of womanhood on the altar of sexual lust and perversion.

Having built up a marriage concept which the Church, in all its pomp and power, somewhat naturally thought to be impregnable, it strove to keep together permanently men and women who made hells of each others' lives; it inflicted terrible social punishment on the woman who dared to propagate her race without the approval of the Church; it attempted to make procreation and love essentially bedmates; it denounced as the

IN EPITOME

awful sin of lust any attempt to divorce the procreative act from the sex act.

I have attempted to show how, under the incubus of religion, for centuries men and women the civilized world over, submitted tamely to this monstrous arrangement, how they subscribed to it and voiced their approval with sonorous hallelujahs. I have traced the growth, in the nineteenth century, of the rebellion against this terrible persecution. This rebellion on the part of woman, and, to a lesser degree, on the part of man, has been facilitated enormously in recent years by the tremendous social and economic changes that have occurred in the civilized world—the widespread practice of contraception, the decay of religion, the emancipation of woman, the growing femininity of man, the economic effects of the machine age, the decline of professional prostitution, the changes in standards of morality. I have demonstrated how all these various factors have had their influences upon the already muddled Christian concept of marriage.

Your ecclesiastical dignitary is nothing if not stubborn. He may realize in the end that his position is untenable but he will never publicly

MARRY OR BURN

admit it. And for sheer stubbornness your politician runs him a very good second in the race. Thus Church and State proceed to blindfold themselves and one another; they continue to mouth the same inanities as did their ancestors; they subscribe to laws which were made to fit totally different conditions.

II

The mental antics of morons such as Rotarians, Kiwanians, Elks and other harmless varieties of *Homo sapiens*, invariably provide for me much gratuitous amusement. Each individual has the undeniable right to believe in any particular brand of nonsense he fancies—my objection is solely concerned with any attempt against my will to stuff this nonsense down my throat. Thus I have no quarrel with religion *per se*, whether it be Christianity, Mohammedism, Buddhism, Taoism, Mormonism, Secularism, Theosophy, Communism or Democracy—the practitioners of these and other religions may chant to each other their chauvinistic punk till the cows come home. But with this they are never content. The lesson

IN EPITOME

of history is that religion cannot help meddling with the liberty of the subject; that the more ecumenic and more powerful the religion the more complete will be the meddling. So much so in fact that the powerful and crushing grasp is felt by society even after the particular brand of hokum responsible for it has died the death. The fact that the Bible is almost universally ridiculed, that Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary are in danger of becoming as mythical as Adam and Eve does not perceptibly weaken the ecclesiastical dominance over the rules and regulations governing marriage.

It is here that society's quarrel with Christianity fructifies and crystallizes. The moth-eaten traditions that have for so long enveloped love and marriage are tottering. But in itself the mere fact of tottering is not enough. Obsolete ideas and shattered traditions must go, or monogamy itself will decay and die. Twentieth-century civilization cannot endure if befogged and choked by mediæval conventions. The Church and the State think it can and they act accordingly. Modernistic thought rebels at such stupidity: more, sickened, it vomits in disgust.

MARRY OR BURN

III

Largely the solution of the marriage problem, that is so far as any solution is possible, resolves itself into facing facts. The point that these facts are, to many, unpalatable, outrageous or even disgusting matters little.

Marriage is afflicted with distempers many and varied. In the main, these diseases are the products of modern civilization and environment. The enormously increased cost of living frightens men away from any permanent form of alliance; woman's lowered virtue and her hugely increased freedom render marriage unnecessary for many men and coincidentally increase greatly the incidence of divorce. Thus simultaneously marriage is declining in popularity, and even when consummated is in imminent danger of wreck or termination. More and more it becomes dependent for its endurance on the continued existence of love between its partners.

I have already indicated that the emotion called love in anything but a purely transient form is monumentally rare; its endurance depends upon

IN EPITOME

the possession by both partners to the marriage union of the art of love, which in turn calls for the mastering of a difficult technic. Thus for man and woman in the main love cannot endure, and in consequence marriage tends to become a sort of business partnership or it smashes to bits in the divorce court. The State must realize and accept these fundamental facts; it must sweep aside ecclesiastical objections and grant divorce at the request of either partner to the marriage, making provision where necessary for the woman and for the children on a business basis.

The old notion that procreation of children is necessarily the object of marriage and inevitably the outcome of it, must go. The woman's right to practice birth control must be conceded. The denial of her right to abort an unwanted child, irrespective of her husband's wishes, is an injustice which the State can no longer logically uphold. As a corollary the social ostracism meted out to the unmarried mother is a monstrous injustice—the day is coming when the population of the civilized world may well be dependent on accidents of this and allied natures.

MARRY OR BURN

Children, as I have again and again reiterated, are accidents: modern parents are sick at the thought of having unwanted brats to rear. This one fact smashes to smithereens the position taken up by the Church and State: makes the present attitude towards abortion and extraordinary sex relationships unjust, intolerant, illogical and, in truth, itself suspiciously like a crime.

The error which would-be reformers of marriage have made and are continuing to make, lies in their strenuous insistence on attempting to devise means for keeping unions existent. Realizing the impossibility of this I make no such effort. Marriage reform must lie in an extension of facilities for breaking these unions: and in the recognition that a free-love alliance is just as likely and in many circumstances far more likely to endure happily than a union cemented with God's blessing and ecclesiastical pomp.

Love alone justifies marriage; love alone makes its restrictions and trammels endurable—at least, to anyone whose intelligence is superior to that of a hog. When love ceases to exist between man and wife the parties to the union should be perfectly free to end it.

